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HOLDING THE POSITION

FOR the Syrens, no orchids. Its captain lashed stoutly to the mast of financial rectitude, the Treasury ship holds to its grimly balanced course. Taking a cautious view of prospective revenue, which will lack in 1949-50 many of last year's non-recurrent windfalls, Sir Stafford Cripps aims at a conventional surplus of £470 millions, reduced by extra-budgetary outgoings — war damage payments, housing loans, etc.—to an overall surplus, including debt repayment, of £33 millions. This is admittedly a much milder dose of disinflation than the Chancellor administered last year, when the corresponding overall surplus was £375 millions; but in the altered circumstances of 1949, in which he admits that inflationary risks have diminished and that economic recession is a possibility, it is stiff enough.

By no stretch of the imagination can this be described as a popular Budget. In framing his final balance-sheet, Sir Stafford has, if anything, tilted the scales in favour of the possessing class. True, he moves towards the egalitarian society by rightly scaling up death duties (to the tune of £20 millions in a full year) on estates worth over £35,000; and, with a modest contribution from the brewery companies, he takes a penny off the thirsty worker's pint. But, beer and wine apart —and here he seems to have been influenced purely by the patent evidence of diminishing returns—he has made no effort either to lighten the burden of the cost of living or to alleviate the disincentive effects of high taxation on earned incomes. Not merely is Purchase Tax, even on essentials, unaltered, and hopes of a modest increase in earned and "dependents" income-tax allowances dashed; the food subsidies are cut by £100 millions below their projected 1949-50 cost, with the expected result of a 2 per cent. rise in the cost of living. And with this saving, accompanied by higher taxes on matches and increased telephone charges, the Chancellor proceeds to knock £75 millions off taxation on corporate business, by according more generous allowances for expenditure on new plant.

In this half-way stage towards Socialism there is nothing illogical or regrettable in a decision to mulct the dead and encourage (if he modernises his factory) the living capitalist; and—given his fundamental assumptions—the tax adjustments which Sir Stafford could make were limited. But, though he may claim that he has, in fact, slightly redressed *in the Budget* the disproportionate weight of indirect taxation, the deliberate increase in the cost of basic foodstuffs, following the planned rise last year, in the cost to consumers of clothes and footwear, is a further serious departure from the conception of fair shares and a "national minimum." He can argue that the prospective cost of existing subsidies, at £565 millions, would have upset his Budget balance; but, even at the expense of stiffening surtax on unearned incomes, maintenance of stable prices might have been wiser than courting the risk of irresistible demands for wage increases.

In a Budget, however, which is designed inflexibly—in Sir Stafford's words—"to hold the position," the real point of interest is not so much today's austerity as tomorrow's prospects. And here the Chancellor has chilly comfort to offer. If we decide, he says, to spend £760 millions on social services, *and* an equivalent sum (which may easily swell) on armaments, then we must put up with taxation which absorbs over one-third of the whole national income. There is no gainsaying this cold logic; and we have little doubt that the great majority of people, if they thought about it, would rather have the present services of health, education and insurance than more spendable cash in the pocket with no State protection against adversity. Public welfare before personal "butter"? Yes. Guns before tax reliefs? That is the crux. Given present income and price levels, the national economy cannot, we believe, indefinitely shoulder a tax burden of this magnitude—particularly if business activity and employment decline. Unless armaments expenditure is drastically reduced, "the position" which Sir Stafford Cripps is being forced to "hold" will collapse from within.

Italy After the Pact

Italy's signature to the Atlantic Pact may give the De Gasperi Government a sense of increased military security, but it will do nothing to diminish domestic tension. Mario Scelba, the Minister of the Interior, clearly anticipates intensified opposition from the Communists and their Socialist allies. Last Sunday, he hinted that his systematic campaign against the Left might be rounded off by bringing the Communist leaders to trial for "vast and open violation of the laws" in the interest of "Soviet imperialistic policy." Both the setting and the tactics of this campaign deserve closer attention. Italy, alone of the Marshall Plan countries, has failed to make any real recovery. Aid has been used to tide over immediate difficulties, not for reconstruction. Little has been done to alleviate widespread unemployment. Land reform, in a country where one per cent. of the population owns half the land, is a farce. The gulf between wealth and poverty widens. The acquittal of prominent Fascists by judges whom Mussolini appointed, the toleration of a Fascist revival, and—as in Greece—even the prosecution of former Partisans for illegal possession of arms during the Nazi occupation, have angered democrats and anti-Communists as much as they infuriate the Left. Mario Scelba presumably feels that, against this background, the appeal of Communism cannot be met by economic

recovery, which is non-existent, or by trying to dress up a Government of the Right as a Third Force. His answer is police power, expressed through riot squads of armed jeeps, paratroop units and American armoured cars. The ordinary police, their numbers increased by the transfer of army conscripts to civil duties, are stiffened by a core of men from Mussolini's *Polizia Africana Italiana*. This highly efficient security service may be suitable for civil war. But this is not the way to crush the justified demands for social reform which alone can make Italian recovery possible: it is the road to a police State.

The Trend in Germany

While the complete pattern of forthcoming political and economic developments in Germany against the background of the Atlantic Treaty has still to be shaped by the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Washington, there are several fresh indications already visible. In the matter of dismantling, the view of the Humphrey Committee of American businessmen has prevailed: out of 167 plants scheduled for demolition in the British Zone, no fewer than 155 are to be reprieved. Secondly, the restrictions on German shipbuilding imposed by the Armistice conditions, under which only coasting vessels of a maximum size of 1,500 tons gross could be constructed, are now lifted, and German yards will be permitted to build up to a limit of 7,500 tons—a normal size ocean-going cargo liner. Still more important, broad hints have been given by the E.C.A. representative in Frankfurt that the Military Governors will shortly repeal the ban on direct foreign investment in Germany. Thus the green light will be given to American concerns with Western German subsidiaries and to financial corporations interested in developing a profitable participation in the revival of German exports.

Banned Exports

Publication by the Board of Trade of a more extensive list of goods "of potential military value," whose export to the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe will not in future be permitted, followed promptly on criticisms made by U.S. Senators of Mr. Harold Wilson's statement that in negotiating East-West trade agreements he would be guided "by considerations of economic advantage" and could not "make a rule that such agreements shall be subject to the settlement of political questions." Some of the vetoed exports in the list, *e.g.*, aircraft landing-mats and mine-sweeping equipment, are of obvious military utility. How far the inclusion of other items, such as industrial diamonds and certain machine tools, non-ferrous metals and alloys, will interfere with the development of trade between Britain and Eastern Europe it is difficult to judge. Probably, so far, the restrictive effect of the ban is not such as to be very serious. But the question arises how far the United States will go in insisting on a boycott of Eastern Europe by the Marshall area. It is known that pressure has been brought to bear on France to discontinue deliveries of a number of engineering products; and M. Alphand, the director of Economic Affairs at the Quai d'Orsay, has admitted that the possibility of imposing a ban on certain exports to Eastern Europe is being "studied." We trust that the British and French Foreign Ministers have found an opportunity in Washington of making it plain to Mr. Acheson that, in this issue, America must interpret reasonably the "string conditions" attached to the Marshall Plan. The development of food production in Eastern Europe, which is essential to Western Europe if dollar scarcity is to be overcome, will be seriously retarded if "security" is to be invoked as a reason for extensive bans on the export of "general purpose" engineering products.

Food and Population

There have been so many pessimistic voices since the war, suggesting that perhaps Malthus was right after all, that it is consoling to have Sir John Russell, this year's President of the British Association, proclaming boldly that, at the present rate of increase in world population, there is no need to fear grave food shortages in our time, except perhaps in India and parts of Africa. Even there, Sir John sees hopeful prospects if intelligent measures are taken. He points out, for example, that there still remains in India uncultivated land equal in area to two-thirds of that now being farmed. Like Aldous Huxley, with whom he collaborates in the Bureau of Current Affairs' pamphlet, *Food and People*, Sir John does not underestimate the magnitude of the world food problem, but he disagrees with Huxley in that he maintains that increase of productivity is a more realistic answer than the restriction of human reproductivity. Apart from the utilisation for food production of considerable areas of the tropics now made available with the help of synthetic insecticides and modern implements, there is no reason, short of war, why Europe should not regain the position which it held before the war when barely 5 per cent. of its bread-grains came from overseas. Even in this country we are far from having reached the "ceiling" of food production; and it is interesting to note that the Committee on Industrial Production, under the chairmanship of Sir Henry Tizard, supports the view that within five years Britain's food production can be increased by 20 per cent., to feed 4 million more people from our own resources. This can be achieved, the Committee considers, without very heavy capital investment, provided full use is made of existing scientific knowledge and practices.

Peace in Israel ?

In achieving an armistice with Transjordan, as well as Egypt, Israel has scored a considerable diplomatic success. Taken together, the two documents seem to assure Jewish tenure, not only of the whole Negeb, but of New Jerusalem and Western Galilee, and thus to enlarge considerably the area allotted to Israel by the United Nations' recommendations of November 29th, 1947. What has happened, in fact, has been a division, between the three strongest parties, of the Palestinian-Arab State proposed by Unscop. By skilfully playing Egypt off against Transjordan and enticing both to share in the spoils of his military victories, Ben Gurion has committed them to full recognition of Israel. Under the deal, Farouk, despite his humiliating defeats in the field, acquires the coastal strip up to Gaza which Mr. Bevin was so anxious should go to Transjordan. Abdullah gets most of the Arab triangle in the Central Highlands but accepts important adjustments in the coastal belt which provide Israel with a strategic frontier at her most vulnerable point. He has also agreed to direct negotiations outside the framework of Uno conciliation. With all this settled out of court, the Syrians will be bound very speedily to come to terms. Dr. Bunche is to be congratulated on a settlement in which for the first time both Arabs and Jews have sacrificed prestige to realistic considerations of self-interest.

Bewildering Burma

Burmese Government troops have reoccupied Mandalay, and a considerable force of Karens has surrendered in Insein. The President of the Karen National Union is now negotiating with Thakin Nu, who has offered the Karens a State within the Burmese Union. The curious alliance of Karens with Communists has not been able to consolidate its military victories or to maintain political unity. The Government also has been divided within itself. U Kyaw Nein, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, has resigned, taking with him the Socialist Ministers and those who belonged to the Yellow-Band People's Volunteer Organisation. Vehemently anti-Communist, he was throughout in favour of an all-out drive against the rebels. Thakin Nu, on the other hand, who always lays most stress on personal integrity and political tolerance, has long been prepared to make great concessions if they could help to bring an end to the civil war and restore the economy of the country. The resignation of the Socialists does not mean that they will work in opposition to the Government or withdraw from the Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, in which they are the strongest party. They will continue to support the Government—making way, with every sign of goodwill, for the appointment of Mr. Justice E. Maung and General Ne Win, who, as Minister of the Interior and Minister of Defence respectively, will carry weight and authority with a wide non-party public. The new Cabinet must be regarded as a "peace" Government. Thakin Nu will fight for constitutional Government if he is compelled to do so, but he knows well that the only possible results of prolonged fighting in Burma are bankruptcy and chaos.

The Parks and the Commission

The fact that the House of Commons gave a second reading, without a division, to the National Parks Bill was partly a tribute to the persuasiveness with which Mr. Silkin presented his measure, and partly reflected recognition by the House that the Minister was evidently ready to consider amendments in Committee. There was, in fact, on both sides of the House a general disposition to complain that the powers of the National Parks Commission had been so whittled down that it would act in a purely advisory capacity; and though Mr. Silkin and his Parliamentary Secretary, Mr. King, argued forcibly that local authorities should not be placed in an actual minority on the local Park Committees, there appeared to be a strong feeling that the proportion of "national" nominees on these Committees should be increased to at least a third, if not two-fifths. Other points of criticism to which, we hope, full attention will be given in Committee were that development expenditure should be a 100 per cent. Exchequer responsibility, and that it should be provided more explicitly in the Bill that financial aid may be given through the National Parks Commission or the local Park Committees to voluntary bodies, such as the Youth Hostel Association and the W.T.A., for the provision of suitable accommodation for potential users of the parks. As Mrs. Barbara Castle observed in a very effective and penetrating speech, the National Parks will not be "national" unless their management makes provision for accommodation of a kind and at a cost within the reach of people who seldom enjoyed holidays in such surroundings before.

Steel Price Policy

It is difficult to understand why the Government should have chosen this moment to cancel the subventions which partly offset current high costs of imported iron ore, scrap and steel products. True, the maintenance of the subsidies

in 1949-50 would have cost £25 million; and this saving may have seemed worth while, even though the Chancellor had already decided on reductions in the food subsidies. Coming, however, at a time when a buyers' market is clearly developing, an average advance of 10 per cent. in steel prices will be a serious blow to British shipbuilders, and, to a less extent, motor manufacturers and engineering exporters generally. The argument that steel was being used "wastefully" because it was too cheap is unconvincing; and, unless it is to be assumed that the new policy is designed to satisfy American conceptions of "sound economics," the inference seems to be that this is one more step in the direction of rationing by price. In other words, steel shortage is to be overcome by charging consumers more; then, as supplies become more plentiful, the present allocation system can be dismantled. It will be interesting to see if this change in steel policy will be followed by a similar step in the case of industrial coal prices.

Coal Output and Mining Man-power

In a speech last week-end at Bargoed, Mr. Arthur Horner expressed serious doubt whether recruitment of new entrants to the mining industry is keeping pace with the requirements of the Government's output target. Excluding opencast, the *Economic Survey* indicated that production in 1949 would lie between the limits of 202-207 million tons. Mr. Horner argued that the present labour force, lately static around 727,000, could not produce more than 200 million tons of deep-mined coal. In suggesting that the industry must aim at an employment target of 735,000, apart from covering normal wastage at the rate of about 65,000 a year, the Mineworkers' secretary seemed to place little reliance on the *Survey's* hopes that output this year can be substantially increased by raising the proportion of face-workers from 296,000 to 310,000. Mr. Horner, of course, was making the case for a revised cost-of-living bonus and superannuation for miners. This he did effectively; but, in our opinion, a factor which is at present holding back both recruitment into the mining industry and productivity per manshift is the growing belief in the mines that a trade recession is coming, that the N.C.B. itself is inclined to scale downwards its estimate of coal requirements in 1950, and that miners' unemployment may once again become a feature in the coalfields.

The Kravchenko Verdict

Like a Lewis Carroll contest, the Kravchenko case has ended with prizes for everybody. At the end of exhausting hearings, in which the Soviet Union became the chief defendant, Judge Durkheim and his associates managed to reach a judgment which kept closely to the libel charges which Kravchenko used as an excuse for his personal campaign of political warfare against his own country. The damages against *Les Lettres Françaises* are negligible: even the costs are comparatively small for a long case of such scope. Technically, the Court decided, the paper libelled Kravchenko by calling him a traitor and a liar and insisting he was not merely a drunkard but incapable of writing his book. But the wording of the judgment suggests that, had the epithets been more moderate, the plaintiff might not have succeeded. Admitting, after close observation of the plaintiff's ebullient behaviour, that he had the capacity "of writing or dictating more than sixty pages of such a book," the Court went on to agree that *I Chose Freedom* has, in part, "the characteristics of a pamphlet" in which much is omitted, including "various achievements of the Soviet Government." The Court then turned to praise the defendants' record in the Resistance and to concede that their war experience mitigated the strictures upon a man who not only deserted in time of war but made immoderate attacks upon the Government which he had duped. This conclusion to a sensational case seems to satisfy all parties. Kravchenko claims it as a victory; the defendants escaped lightly on the libel charges and managed, as the trial went on, to make some damaging attacks upon Kravchenko and his anti-Soviet associates; and while the Court disclaimed ability to reach any conclusions about conditions in the Soviet Union, saying the evidence was contradictory, Kravchenko's witnesses provided spectacular material for anti-Communist propaganda in the Western world. Indeed, in this *opera-bouffe* of the cold war, they introduced a theme of human tragedy.

The Case for an Amnesty

For over three years the Minister of Defence has been pressed from many quarters to grant an amnesty to deserters. Last week Mr. Shurmer renewed the attack in a well-informed speech on the Adjournment. He pointed out that in response to the special offer made by Mr. Alexander in January, 1947, only 1,615 men surrendered, and there are probably some 8,000 deserters still "on the run" in this country. (The 10,000 Irish deserters, of course, are safely at home with their families.) It is useless to reply, as Mr. Stewart did, that men who give themselves up "rarely get more than six months" in the glasshouse. Nor can we accept his argument that an amnesty would undermine the basis of National Service To talk in this way not only implies singularly bad morale in the three Services but rules out any amnesty on principle. If Mr. Stewart is right, how have Australia, Canada and South Africa all been able to wipe the slate clean since 1945 and why was a Tory Government able to do so in March, 1922? If it is true that the national serviceman would be encouraged to desert by an amnesty, why does this not apply to the professional soldier in the 1920s? As the *Manchester Guardian* remarked last Wednesday in a striking editorial, "The Labour Party should be the last Party to fall into this callous error."

Press Control in Canada

When Mr. Joseph E. Atkinson, owner of the *Toronto Star*, died in May, 1948, he left his estate to a charitable trust, and directed in his will that control of the *Star*—a liberal paper which he had built up in 50 years from a microscopic circulation to one of nearly 400,000—should not fall into private hands, but should be held by the trust. In thus establishing a form of ownership paralleled in this country by that of *The Times*, Mr. Atkinson expressed in his will the hope that the paper "would be conducted for the benefit of the public . . . with the profit motive . . . subsidiary." Now, however, there is a Bill before the Ontario legislature to provide, first, that death duties can be collected from charitable trusts (hitherto exempt in Canada), and secondly, that no charitable trust may hold more than 10 per cent. of the shares of a limited company. If this Bill goes through, it will mean that the Atkinson Foundation will have to sell 90 per cent. of the shares in the *Toronto Star*, in flat contradiction to the desires of the late owner, and, one wou'd have thought, to public policy. Indeed, no one seems likely to benefit by this Bill except Mr. George McCullagh, proprietor of the *Toronto Star's* rival, the *Evening Telegram*. In Canada he is accused of "promoting" the Bill.

PARLIAMENT: A Bit of Brawn

Wednesday

THE early stages of the Meat Debate were quiet. The Front Benches had agreed not to quarrel about the Argentine negotiations, and Eden, opening for the Tories, was left to talk about feeding-stuffs and Empire supplies. With his familiar Fauntleroy charm, he left no cliché unturned, no platitude unexplored; he got an all-party cheer for saying that, "Britain would not be held to ransom." Things became livelier when Edith Summerskill, a consistently capable Minister and Parlimentarian, gave an account of her Department's world-wide search for meat. The younger Tories began to yelp at double-entendres and verbal slips. These yelps were later in the evening to become a uniform bay.

Fortunately, before then, Royle, a Labour butcher, and Snadden, a Tory farmer, had made solid, helpful speeches, which promoted no special interests, and were merely concerned with how to get more meat. The debate's good humour ended when Robertson, a director of cold storage companies, looking like a candid friend, insinuated interrogatively that Britain had driven too hard a bargain with "this great nation"—the Argentine. (When challenged at a later stage with harming Britain's negotiators, Robertson said that he was only asking.) If the market had gone against Britain—as it might have—would the Argentinians have agreed to drop their prices? Stanley Evans, who yields to no one in looking like a candid friend, made it clear in a trenchant speech that Robertson's *apologia* for the Argentine's breach of contract would be more acceptable in South America than in Britain.

Although the germ of bitterness had now attacked the debate, Leah Manning, Smiles and Hurden carried on with restraint until nearly nine o'clock, when the subject turned from meat to Strachey. Crookshank, the Tories' winder-up, gobbled through his speech until he came to Strachey's administration. Like a schoolboy who, lost in a geometrical problem, triumphantly disentangles himself with the symbol of "*therefore*," hoping that no one will notice that the answer is wrong, Crookshank added a tailpiece to his speech that, therefore, Strachey must go.

The Tories were in their happy, after-dinner mood when Strachey rose to reply. All their sedentary speakers were there, including Smithers. (Example: *Strachey*—". . . the pig population—" *Smithers*—"You're one!"). The Tory barracking got off to a good start. Strachey mixed up "kilos" and "pounds." The Tories laughed. Strachey stumbled. They tripped him again. And laughed. He then began a detailed answer to the Tory charges.

But the Tories didn't want to hear a reasoned case. A chatter of interjections began to make Strachey's speech inaudible. He went on, turning to address the Labour benches. Silverman rose on a point of Order for a moment, Major Milner, the Chairman, quietened the House.

Then Strachey turned his attention to Robertson's speech, and in a few lacerating sentences tore up its pretentions and exposed its disservice. From then on, the Tories went into full cry, and by their bearing proved once and for all the case against blood sports. But Strachey, although his voice was drowned in the clamour, survived. He stood at the Box, and smiled. For a short time, he, the Tories and Major Milner played a game of musical chairs as they bobbed up and down to the tune of "Order" and "Point of Order." At last he sat down. The Tories had proved their point. They could shout louder than he could speak.

But though "Time" had been called, the evening wasn't yet over. Instead of the orderly movement of Members to the Lobbies, there was a disorderly confluence in the middle of the floor. Shurmer (five foot) bore down threateningly on Hinchingbrooke (six foot four or so). Leah Manning advanced on an Admiral. One Honourable Member was heard to address another as a "bloody Socialist." Members stood chest to chest, and breast to chest in the traditional "Oh, you will, will you?" "Yes, I will!" style. The Chief Whip, white-haired and red-faced among the waving arms, protected his flock.

Meeting each other afterwards in the Members' Lobby, Tories and Socialists looked white-faced and rather sheepish.

MAURICE EDELMAN

ATLANTIC IMPACT

For once the word "historic" has not been wrongly applied. The signing of the Atlantic Pact was a ceremonial recognition of a turning point in world history. The United Nations have been increasingly divided since the Armistice; since last Monday the disunity has been ratified by the Western democracies. They have now formally constituted themselves the United anti-Communist Nations.

The stage is now set either for an armaments race leading to World War III or for a gradual relaxation of tension and, finally, an agreement to disagree. The difficulty for the average citizen is that in the very period when he is being committed to peace or war, it will be difficult to know which of the two is actually taking place. The main danger is that Russia will at once assume that the Atlantic Treaty makes war inevitable—and draw the consequences. This assumption, of course, made by either side, would itself be a prime cause of war. Sanity on one side is not sufficient. Unless both parties regard peace as something worth taking risks for, war is inevitable sooner or later.

The determining issue, therefore, both in Washington and Moscow may be the scale of rearmament. As the Germans found in the late 'thirties, a modern economy given over to preparations for total war drives its leaders into actual hostilities. They may sincerely wish to use the threat of war in order to achieve their designs, and they may actually be achieving those designs by its employment. But there comes a point in total mobilisation where the machine itself takes over from the politician, and the alternatives are war or complete economic collapse. Forms of government make little difference at this point. A democracy, a Fascist State and a Union of Soviet Republics may all drift into the state where war preparations by their scale remove the choice between peace and war.

At present neither the Eastern nor the Western Powers are anywhere near this fatal point. Both their economies are still more or less in balance, though, on both sides, rearmament is already retarding domestic reconstruction. In Europe and America, however, it is also acting as a steadying factor in what are still for the most part free economies. Indeed, the present sharp recession in the U.S.A., which has brought unemployment to nearly four millions, would almost certainly develop into a slump this summer if nearly one-fifth of the national income were not being siphoned off by the Federal Government and spent chiefly on defence and Marshall Aid.

Almost certainly there are men in the Kremlin who believe that this balance cannot be maintained. The Western Powers, they argue, must slither willy-nilly into total rearmament. This is a rash simplification. It comes naturally to a Russian, because he overlooks the working of a political democracy. Up to 1914, a political democracy could prepare for full-scale war without unduly distorting its economy and imposing major sacrifices on the population. To-day this is out of the question.

Let us take one simple instance. It was recently proposed in the House of Commons by a Labour back-bencher that, to make the Atlantic Treaty effective, Britain should maintain ten effective divisions for the defence of Western Europe, in addition to existing Commonwealth commitments, and quite apart from vast new expenditure on the Air Force. If all this is to be paid for out of our own national budget, the defence estimates will have to be doubled, if not trebled. Politically, this is out of the question. Yet France and Benelux would consider ten effective divisions a very modest contribution by Britain to Western European defence.

Very well, let the Americans pay. But once again the taxpayer in a democracy is a vocal obstacle to preparations for total war. Already the Americans see that nearly half the Federal budget goes on defence and Marshall Aid, items which bring them no direct benefit, and another huge section of the Budget pays for the veterans of past wars. General Bradley may argue in general terms for assisting Western Europe to defend itself; but Mr. Truman knows perfectly well that he cannot impose heavy new taxes at a time when business is tight without arousing a wave of fiscal isolationism which would make the Atlantic Treaty a dead letter. Sooner or later, the man in the street is going to demand that he gets something for himself out of the vast taxes which he pays—social security or housing or a free medical service or, best of all, the whole package as he was promised in the Fair Deal. A free people can always be reckoned on to jib at the price of really preparing for war.

There are some who argue that herein lies the great weakness of the Atlantic Treaty. Though we are all pledged to resist aggression, we are none of us ready to foot the bill. Paradoxically, however, this democratic resistance to total rearmament is the main safeguard today of world peace. In the first place, it compels our own Governments to continue building what is the only real bulwark against Communism, decent standards of living on our side of the iron curtain. In the second place, it will, if effectively maintained, provide for the Russians a sign that the Atlantic Treaty need not be, as they now believe, an aggressive conspiracy to launch war against the Soviet Union. If the American people refuse to pay for building and manning a new Maginot Line and demand a Fair Deal, they will not only be helping themselves but laying the surest foundation for a peace based on an agreement to disagree.

YUGOSLAVIA AT THE CROSSROADS

Belgrade's most famous building is her only skyscraper—a 13-storey affair called the "Albania"; and the city also has a number of hotels, one of which is called the "Moscow," and another the "London." The most popular joke in Belgrade to-day is the story of Tito being shown some plans for the reconstruction of the capital, and being asked if he has any suggestions to make. "Well," says Tito, "we should cut the "Albania" in half, pull down the "Moscow," and widen the street leading to the "London."

For more than nine months Russia and the "Peoples' Democracies" have been slinging mud and quotations from Marx, Lenin, and Stalin at Yugoslavia; while Yugoslavia has been throwing other Marxist quotations at them to show that she is a better Marxist than they, that Stalin is not infallible, and that Yugoslavia is perfectly right in going ahead with her "building of Socialism." Since December especially, the Yugoslav leaders have been more and more emphatic in their statements to the effect that the Soviet Union and the "People's Democracies" are deliberately sabotaging Yugoslavia's Five Year Plan and that, such being the case, Yugoslavia will trade with the West as much as possible—*i.e.*, as much as she needs for her Plan and as much as the West is willing to trade with her.

It is not only a question of trade. It may, before long, become a question of credits. The official Yugoslav line is that there is nothing wrong in taking credits from America, and case after case is quoted in the press here showing that even Anna Pauker's Rumania has recently been getting loans from London bankers. Important talks are in progress in Belgrade at this very moment between the Yugoslavs and representatives of important steel interests in the U.S.A.; their aim is to set up blast furnaces and rolling mills and to increase greatly the country's steel output. Figures like 100 million dollars are being gaily thrown around. The official party line, as laid down by the Yugoslav C.P.'s ideologist, Moshe Pijade, is that "we shall go right ahead, for it will take the East some time yet to realise and to admit that they have committed a sin against Yugoslavia." The clear suggestion in all this is that Yugoslavia will go her own way in building Socialism "without the Soviet Union" for the time being, and that a reconciliation will then take place between Tito and Stalin.

Whatever may happen in, say, 20 years' time, a reconciliation between the two is almost impossible to envisage in any foreseeable future—unless the Russians become completely desperate and make friends with Tito on Tito's terms. Meanwhile, a war of nerves, more ferocious than anything between East and West, has been waged by the East against Yugoslavia. There is every reason to suppose that all, or most, of the recent stories about "riots in Macedonia," "troop movements on the Hungarian and Rumanian border," "revolt in the Yugoslav army," and so forth—stories which hit the front pages of hundreds of Western newspapers—were simply planted in Trieste, Vienna, Rome, Paris, Istanbul, etc., by Cominform agents, and joyfully lapped up by our newshounds. Those official "spokesmen" and semi-official advisers of our Press, who get all hot and bothered the moment anyone suggests that the Czechs are not starving, and who encourage all the sillier forms of wishful thinking about Poland and Czechoslovakia, were themselves readily taken in by these planted rumours, not realising that their main purpose was to demonstrate to the West that Yugoslavia was not in a fit condition to be helped economically by the West, and was, in short, a dud investment.

Having travelled all the way to both the Hungarian border and the Rumanian border, I can say that there are no "troop movements" there of any description, and that the Voivodina is about as peaceful as your back garden. If there is to be any trouble, fostered from outside, it will come in the South, not in the North; but I shall come to that later. To-day, the two big questions in Yugoslavia are:

(1) How much headway has Cominform propaganda made in the last nine months to prepare for the overthrow of the Tito regime; and is the country on the verge of an economic collapse, which would help the "Cominformists"?

(2) Can the Russians allow the Yugoslavs to remain "independent," *i.e.*, increasingly dependent on *Western* economic and financial support? And if not, how can they put an end to it?

My own impression is that Cominform propaganda has made some headway in Yugoslavia since the quarrel, but not as much as the Russians like to imagine. People listen, on the whole, as much to Radio-Moscow and Radio-Budapest as they listen to Western broadcasts; but Cominform propaganda has the weakness of being extraordinarily crude and often offensive to Serb national sentiment; moreover, the Serbs especially

do not like to be told by Budapest what they are to do. There is, indeed, no evidence of any organised anti-Tito opposition in the country. That there is some pro-Russian sentiment is true enough, notably in Serbia and Montenegro.

Such sentiments exist, of course, far less in Croatia and Slovenia; but, even in Serbia, pro-Russian sentiment is scarcely an overriding passion, and the passage of the Red Army through Serbia has left memories which are not uniformly happy. There is, in fact, no overwhelmingly pro-Russian sentiment among peasants and other "ordinary people," even in Serbia. On the other hand, pro-Western feeling is limited in Serbia to the remnants of the middle-class, though in Croatia it is, naturally, more widespread. Uncle Sam has, one is sorry to say, taken the place of the Führer in the heart of many a Croat Catholic.

But what about the Yugoslav Communist Party, for whose benefit the Cominform propaganda is principally dished out? There is good reason to suppose that there are three elements in the C.P.Y. First, there are the out-and-out Titoites, mostly ex-Partisans and other patriotic (or, as Moscow would say, nationalist) hero-worshippers—men imbued with Serbian stubbornness, or with an instinctive Croatian dislike for Russia. Then there is a secret Cominform group which is still, it seems, almost totally unorganised (except perhaps in Montenegro and Macedonia), but which will respond to a call from Moscow if and when it comes to a showdown. Lastly comes the not inconsiderable mass of fence-sitters—perhaps the largest of the three groups—who, in given circumstances, might jump either way, but who, for the present, are still inclined to "give Tito a chance." These people would, on the whole, prefer Yugoslavia *not* to be run on Cominform lines; but, if they found the Cominform winning, they would back the winner.

Now, a very important point to remember about Yugoslavia is that, despite all the lurid Russian prophe ies of an imminent economic collapse during the winter that has just passed, such a collapse has, in reality, not taken place. Living conditions are bad, but no worse than six months ago. The railways are running badly; the locomotives are much too few and in a poor state of repair, and there are only 3,000 (pretty dilapidated) passenger coaches, as against 5,000 before the war. Yet some things are quite efficiently run—for example, the export of metals, notably copper, and the export of timber.

Some progress, too, has lately been made in organising better canteens for the workers, and there has also been a slight improvement in the supply of shoes and textiles. The peasants live not too badly, except, of course, in the more wretched parts of Dalmatia and Southern Serbia, where the poverty is as fearful as before the war. Moreover, while 16 per cent. of the farms have been collectivised, the Party has been warning "activists" against the more extreme forms of "anti-kulak" agitation "which can only create an atmosphere of panic and insecurity in the countryside." In this respect the Party has, indeed, taken the advice of the Cominform Resolution. In fact, by steering a more careful middle course in the villages than they did last year, the Yugoslav C.P. has created a rather better atmosphere there, and a greater willingness on the part of the peasants to co-operate.

The position, then, at the moment is this: Yugoslavia is facing the "most decisive year" of her Five-Year Plan; and she will be able to keep her head above water provided enough help comes from the West, if not in the form of credits, at any rate in the form of a sufficient number of American export licences. Moreover, the Five-Year Trade Agreement with Britain (for a total exchange of £150,000,000) which is now being negotiated—coupled with Yugoslavia's expanding trade with Switzerland, Sweden, Western Germany, and other places—should help to keep her going. It is a paradoxical situation to see big American businessmen in Belgrade discussing the ways in which they are going to help Yugoslavia to "build Socialism." From their point of view it is preferable to do this than to allow Yugoslavia to be absorbed, through economic collapse, in the Russian sphere. Meantime, the Yugoslavs will (usually quite sincerely) continue to go through all the motions of Socialism and Communism; whether it will make sense in Marxist terms only time can show. The Russian line is, of course, that it makes complete nonsense, and that the Yugoslavs are, in effect, "selling out" to the West. The big question, therefore, is: can they afford to allow it? Secondly, what methods can they use to stop it, and how big a risk can they take in trying to stop it?

Belgrade, April. ALEXANDER WERTH

(To be continued)

A LONDON DIARY

WE have reached a point in the cold war when diplomatic Note-writing really seems to have no meaning at all. You do not need to be a prophet or even a Marxist to see that the Atlantic Pact could become aggressive, but few people in the West will take notice of Russia's protests because everyone knew beforehand that Russia would describe it as aggressive whatever its terms were, or whatever chance intelligent people may still have of preventing it becoming aggressive. In the same way, no one in Eastern Europe will take the remotest notice of Western charges that Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania are, contrary to their Treaty obligations, acting against individual liberty. Of course they are; but to a considerable less degree than the Governments of Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania in pre-war days when only a few Radicals or Socialists in the West ever thought of complaining. Some of us have the right to complain about the absence of *habeas corpus*, because for years we tried to get Rakosi out of prison. I cannot remember, however, any British-American Note of protest to Admiral Horthy.

* * *

Unhappily, the Communists have a much better answer to any Western protests than to recall unheeded crimes of past Governments. They have merely to point to present crimes committed by Governments under British and American auspices. How anybody who actually knows what is happening in Greece can have the face to make a fuss about the attack on the Church in Hungary and Bulgaria completely passes my comprehension. A strong Right-wing Greek, whom I met the other day—a soldier who had seen plenty of bloodshed during the war—said to me: "Greece just cannot stand this any more. Most of those who are being killed are young men between 18 and 25. And, besides, there have been at least 4,000 political executions in Athens during the last two or three years." Another 28 Communists, I see, are now due for execution. You need not believe everything that is written by Communists about Greece. But if you want to know the atmosphere and manner of these farcical trials, read a Communist pamphlet called "They Shall Not Die." The letters here from Betty Bartlett, the English wife of Tony Ambatielos, are real and terrible enough. If I were Mr. Bevin and knew that even a quarter of Betty Bartlett's story was true, I should not be able to make protests to Hungary and Bulgaria without feeling for ever damned as a hypocrite.

Mr. Churchill's speech in Boston was remarkable for its skill and eloquence. Also for the fact that the "70 million malignant Huns" of the war have already become desirable allies! The presentation of the speech in America was also a technical landmark.

"Here I sat in my armchair," writes a friend from Washington, "and there was Winnie peering over the top of his notes in Boston. Thanks to the telephoto lens you could even see the last hairs on his head. I realised then just what television can become. On hundreds of thousands of sets, all over the Eastern States, there was the flickering picture of the Boston assembly. Each of Washington's four stations, as I turned the switch, showed Churchill in one perspective or another while the familiar voice boomed. From Boston to New York, the image was transmitted by micro-waves on a line-of-sight system from towers on hills between 30 and 60 miles apart. They bounced Winnie down to us from hill to hill top."

* * *

"An institution, which Englishmen up to date have the right to be proud of, is in dire peril" . . . "It seems to us that the attempt to abolish the duties of an official whose activities are conducted with such admirable tact and discretion is an unnecessary and wanton assault on an institution which has stood the test of time."

These two quotations are extracted from two recent letters published in *The Times* and they do not refer as might be supposed, from their tone of moral indignation, to some attack by the Government on the sanctity of the person, on private enterprise or on the rights of free speech. No, the institution which the letter writers are defending is the censorship of plays by the Lord Chamberlain. And each letter appears above the signature of a successful playwright. The logic of the second quotation may well become a classic of special pleading. Can an office ever be justified by the personal qualities of the holder of it? If so, we were wasting our time arguing lately about the principle of capital punishment; we ought to have been discussing the handiness and dexterity of the public hangman. Surely there are two fundamental principles involved in this question. The first is constitutional: the Lord Chamberlain exercises a completely arbitrary power. Lord Chesterfield in 1737 said the first word about this in opposing the Bill giving the Lord Chamberlain statutory powers. He said: "If the players are to be punished let it be by the laws of the land, not by the will of an irresponsible despot." The second principle involved is aesthetic and on this Mr. Bernard Shaw said the last word in that famous obituary on the censor of the day Mr. Smythe Bigott:

> "If he (this was Clement Scott who defended the censor) if he demands equally direct proof of my statement that the censorship suppresses fine work, he has me at a disadvantage; for I naturally cannot produce the plays that the censorship has prevented from existing. And yet this is the very statement I chiefly desire to establish; for I do not in the least object to the licensing of plays which disgust me, if there are people who are entertained by them: what I object to is the suppression, because they disgust other people, of plays that entertain me. All I can do is to offer to produce a staggering list of authors who have not written for the stage since the evil day when Walpole established the censorship to prevent Fielding from exposing the corruption of Parliament on the stage. Fielding never wrote another play; and from his time to that of Dickens, who was once very fond of the stage, a comparison of our literature

with our drama shows a relative poverty and inferiority on the part of the latter not to be paralleled in any of the countries where the censor only interferes on political grounds."

* * *

It is well to get the record straight about Mr. Strachey's past. The row in the House would scarcely have happened if people had realised that when Mosley resigned from the Labour Party, after the rejection of his planning proposals to defeat unemployment, he formed a New Party. It lasted a very short time. Its leading members resigned when Mosley's Fascist tendencies became undeniable. John Strachey became the leading British Marxist writer; Dr. Joad became a pacifist; Harold Nicolson returned to literature; W. J. Brown became an Independent Member of Parliament. Odd how seldom I hear Conservative Members accuse Harold Nicolson or W. J. Brown of being Fascists!

* * *

The first issue of the *Leader* in its new format has a number of distinguishing features. It appears on Monday, does not attempt to be politically topical, has an "intellectual" (Stephen Potter) as editor and carries a caricature by Low. The most interesting article is an illustrated account of what a dog can see and smell. If its sight is really as coarse as this, a lot of odd things about canine behaviour are explained. The picture showing how much more real are the smells of past dogs around a tree than the nearby figures of visible humans is a brilliant notion. I hope the next issue deals with the vision of cats which often seem unable to see food put on a plate under their noses. But my cat (dark marmalade, therefore called "Golden Shred") sits with its mouth watering at the window watching birds at a considerable distance. I am not sure how far it is an exceptional cat. I have never before known one that would retrieve like a dog. Throw paper balls for it and it will chase them all day long, following their flight in the air with great accuracy, leaping over chairs and tables, pouncing on the ball as it hits the ground, and bringing it back in triumph, make small pleased noises as it walks. I hope the *Leader* will give us a scientific account comparing a cat's capacity to see and smell with those of a dog. CRITIC

BALLADE OF BEEF

OUR Argentine Meat-Pact is chilled,
The crisis with friction is fraught,
Beef contracts expire unfulfilled,
Extortionate prices are fought;
Our meat-eating public is taught,
As the rations weigh light in the scales,
Why credit no more can be sought—
We have eaten the Argentine Rails.

While hopes of concessions are killed
By the new Buenos Aires onslaught,
No frozen meat stocks can we build,
And bulk buyers of beef are distraught;
Perón does not trade as he ought,
No Meat Mission offer avails;
Our bargaining power is naught—
We have eaten the Argentine Rails.

The sirloin too tough to be grilled
The Andes Agreement has brought,
The fillet that has to be drilled,
The brisket of ironwork wrought.
The scrap with the scrag we have bought,
Old buffers and sleepers and nails;
With hides, hoofs and horns we are caught—
We have eaten the Argentine Rails.

We have no expectation of aught
As the corned-beef two-pennyworth fails;
We find it is just as we thought—
We have eaten the Argentine Rails.

SAGITTARIUS

THIS ENGLAND

Prizes are awarded of £1 for the first entry and 5/- for each of the others printed.

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Not so long ago in St. Andrew's House I sat for three-quarters of an hour on a Committee on Hill Sheep Farming when I was under the impression that it was the Committee for the Rehabilitation and Treatment of Young Criminal Offenders.—Speech reported in *Aberdeen Press and Journal*. (Mary McLean.)

Sheriff Mackay said they had to consider the public also. If babies were to be left in post-offices life would become impossible.—Report in *Scotsman*. (Mrs. Sturrock.)

Coming to London in the train this morning, a man sitting next to me was reading the *Daily Worker* while all the time softly whistling the Eton Boating Song.— Letter in *The Times*. (E. C. Allberry.)

Princess Margaret seems on the way to becoming a House of Commons "fan." The Princess herself declares that the House gives her a chance of seeing human nature "in the raw" such as she seldom has elsewhere.—*Glasgow Bulletin*. (Mary M. Cairns.)

AMERICAN LABOUR IN POLITICS

[This is the first of a series of articles by Mr. R. H. S. Crossman, M.P., who has just returned from the United States.]

IT was the end of my journey, and I was lunching with a well-known liberal writer in Washington. "The fact is," he remarked, "that the healthy middle element in this country is being ground to pieces between the two extremes of reaction and Communism. The outlook is grim."

Listening to his gentle pessimism I could not help contrasting it with my own experiences during the previous four weeks. I had decided to see what I could of the politics of seven cities outside the influence of New York and Washington, and had chosen, almost at random, Pittsburg, Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago among the Northern industrial cities, Kansas City in the Middle West, and New Orleans and Atlanta in the South. In all of them I had found a politically-conscious Labour movement which certainly had nothing to do with the extremes of Communism and reaction. This movement, of course, is divided by the factional strife of the C.I.O. and A.F. of L., and exhausted by a two-year struggle against the Communists which, in many unions, is not yet won. It varies enormously from city to city both in its strength and in its politics. But the fact remains that organised Labour in the U.S.A. is now for the first time politically-conscious. Taft-Hartley has proved as effective a catalyst as our own Taff Vale decision nearly 50 years ago. The unions, which used to be merely one group of interests, have become a Labour Movement.

How did my liberal host overlook this fact which seemed so obvious to me? Largely because Labour now floats like an iceberg in a sea of political ballyhoo. Its union activities are plainly visible above the surface, but the vast bulk of the new amorphous political movement is submerged in anonymity. That no one writes about it is due to the condition of the press and radio. American journalism has made a rapid recovery from its electoral shock of last November and, forgetting any lessons it may have learnt from Dewey's defeat, continues the elaborate pretence that America is a classless society in which every worker hopes to become a millionaire. Since the disappearance of the New York *Star*, the short-lived successor to *P.M.*, there is not a newspaper which unreservedly supports the Fair Deal, let alone sympathises with organised Labour, though half a dozen papers and about the same number of leading newspaper columnists are cautiously sympathetic to liberal ideas.

Moving from city to city, I was puzzled at first by the uniformity on all policy matters of a free press and a commercial, and therefore "free," radio system. In each city I found a different murder story on the front page—indeed there are seven trials of which I shall never know the verdict—but the rest of the news was canned in the same factory. The three newspapers of Detroit, for instance, a city with 600,000 members of the United Automobile Workers, preach the same streamlined reactionary gospel as the *Star* of Kansas City or the *Times-Picayune* of New Orleans. With rare exceptions, variety, which should be the glory of a country without "nationals," is confined to crime, society and advertising columns. Surprisingly enough, the two best papers I read were the *Constitution* and the *Journal*—both of Atlanta, Georgia. In the capital of Governor "Hummon" Talmadge's Negro-baiting empire they dare to print unpopular news and views.

Why is there no liberal or Labour press in the U.S.A.? An unusually candid editor provided the solution. "My paper depends for its advertising revenue on six big stores, and they depend for their sales on me. We boom or bust together. What matters to both of us are the middle-aged, middle-class women who play bridge, with the radio on, in the afternoon." Though advertisers do not directly influence editorial policy, there can be no doubt that the primary function of American newspapers, radio and television to-day is commercial. They are advertising media and the news has become a secondary consideration. So, through every organ of publicity, America tries to persuade herself that she is still a society of business men and farmers in which the worker shares the outlook of the employer. To admit the existence of Labour as a political movement would destroy the myth of the open society.

The political distortion caused by the absence of a liberal press is aggravated by the present make-up of the political parties. In the House of Representatives there are now 10 Congressmen more or less closely linked with the Unions and something over 60, out of a total of 435, who can be called convinced supporters of the Fair Deal. In the Senate there are perhaps 10 thorough-going liberals amongst the 96 Senators. These figures seem ridiculously small if you compare them with the analysis of the election results published by the A.F. of L. and C.I.O. in the first flush of victory. As late as last January, Labour leaders in Washington still regarded themselves as the lobbyists for a pressure group rather than leaders of a political movement. They rashly reckoned as supporters of the Fair Deal all those Democrats and Republicans who pledged themselves to vote for rescinding the Taft-Hartley Act, assuming that Labour's only job in this Congress would be to lobby these legislators into fulfilling their election pledges. They are beginning to discover that a pledge given on a single issue does not turn a politician into a liberal. Even in the case of the Taft-Hartley Act, when amendments to the new Bill are proposed by reactionaries, many so-called friends of Labour will fail in the vote, and the substance of the Act is likely to remain law.

One Democrat in the House of Representatives, who would be a solid Labour Member over here, suggested to me that the only way to understand this Congress is to forget the Parties altogether,

and to divide the Members into old-time professional politicians and "New Liberals." Most of the Democrats, he explained, made the usual contradictory pledges to various pressure groups. They never took the Fair Deal seriously and assumed that, after the election was over, the serious job of log-rolling and manœuvring could begin. The New Liberals came to Washington for the most part as freshmen, quite unexpectedly elected, and their expectations were not unlike those of Labour Members here in August, 1945. I talked with many of them and it was painful to see their distress. They feel themselves tricked and betrayed by their own leadership. Though civil rights was a major issue at the election, they observe the Dixiecrats sharing the spoils of office. In a period of acute housing shortage, they see rent control undermined in a pretence of prolonging it. Even worse, the Administration floor leaders in both Houses seem to have no serious intention of fighting to push the Truman programme through. Last week, for instance, without any help from their leaders, the New Liberals had to organise the defeat of the Rankin Veterans' Bill. If passed, this would have spent so much on old-age pensions for ex-Servicemen that nothing would have been left over for social security. But nobody seemed to mind except sixty freshmen!

The indignation of these New Liberals is the one bright patch in Washington to-day. Roosevelt carried through the New Deal almost in defiance of Congress. During his first term it was too frightened to resist. During his second and third terms he was increasingly frustrated by it; but he never found time, or perhaps opportunity, to transform the Democratic Party into a Liberal Party. With Truman in the White House, this task must be undertaken. He can speak for the common people and win an election by his personal integrity. But it is already clear that he cannot administer a social revolution.

The New Liberals in Congress and the Labour leaders outside now realise that the election results last November were not a victory for the Fair Deal but only a defeat of Dewey. As one union leader put it to me, "This time we had to make sure that the real 'bad 'uns' were not re-elected. We were voting *against* not *for*." The result was inevitable. The Democratic majority is not liberal but merely negatively anti-reactionary; and it is unlikely that much more will be achieved before 1950 than Mr. Dewey and his friends would have put through. The 81st Congress will not have a record much better than the 80th.

What matters to the future of America therefore are developments outside Washington. The Democratic Party can only be reshaped in the State and city machines, since it is here that the lists of candidates are determined in the primaries, and in this determination Labour can play a decisive role.

It is true, of course, that the Democratic Party cannot win without the farmers' vote. But the issue of the crucial mid-term election of 1950 will be whether the Fair Deal as a whole shall become law; and the Fair Deal, with its minimum wage, social security, free medical service, is essentially a Charter of Rights for the Labour Movement. The President and Congress who enact it will irrevocably commit themselves to a planned economy. In the U.S.A., the farmers accepted this many years ago, when they gave up free enterprise in exchange for guaranteed prices. The planned economy in agriculture is something which no one condemns as Socialistic, and it will soon lead to a Federal cropping policy not dissimilar from our own agricultural planning. It is in industry that the issue is undecided. Shall the concealed subsidies and other forms of assistance now provided by the State to organised capital be parallelled by social security for the employee? Shall the whole economy be disciplined to the needs of the community by Federal planning? The answer to these questions depends upon the relationship which the Labour Movement establishes with the Democratic Party between now and 1950.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

SOCIALIST MEDICINE

ALREADY under the new National Health Service more than seventy-five million prescriptions have been dispensed, over three million pairs of glasses supplied or ordered, and much money spent on dental treatment, 40 per cent of which has gone for the provision of artificial teeth. In other words, by a scheme of bulk purchase, the services of Capitalist Medicine have been provided for millions who otherwise would not have received them. But is this Socialism?

In a few directions the health services have actually deteriorated since last July. Many public dental officers, who were doing first-class preventive work for mothers and children, have been attracted by the larger incomes made by private dental practitioners under the scheme and have left the service; at one time as many as a third of the public dental officers employed by the L.C.C. had resigned and their places were unfilled. Proposals are now under the consideration of the Ministry for the provision of pay-beds in many hospitals, previously under municipal control, that had no such beds before. Some of these proposals involve the withdrawal of most or even all of the single-bedded wards from the general service of the hospital, so that patients who are noisy, dying, or in any way unpleasant to others have to continue to be nursed in the general wards, to the disadvantage of all concerned.

It may be said generally that, whenever the Minister has given way to the clamour of the medical profession, the service, and the public who depend on it, have suffered. In Scotland, the teaching hospitals are part of the regional hospital scheme. South of the Border, however, they are in it, but not of it; they are completely independent units within the administrative area of the Regional Boards. Difficulties are bound to arise as to the admission of cases, the location of special departments, and other matters. Further, the teaching hospitals would be in a much better position to exert their stimulating influence if they could speak to the other hospitals as brothers rather than as rich uncles. Then there is the provision of pay-beds in which the doctors charge fees for treatment, and the existence of which is bound to result in two standards of treatment.

For many years the writer worked in a hospital with such beds. He feels quite sure that he did his best to operate as carefully on his public as on his private patients. But he is equally sure that he left the after-care of his public patients a good deal more to his registrar and house surgeon; and, in so far as his experience was greater than theirs, his private patients had presumably the better treatment. In any case, however, they thought they had; and, now that all services are free, hospital doctors will be compelled to encourage this delusion (assuming it to be one) if private practice is to continue.

Again, there are serious objections to the payment of general practitioners by capitation. As soon as doctors become more numerous and more evenly distributed, the competition for patients, inevitable under capitation, will become evident, and this must make team work in the health centres impossible. There is also a real danger in permitting national health service doctors to engage in private practice. If a doctor receives two calls of approximately equal urgency, one from a patient for whose care he will be paid in any case, and the other from one for whom he will receive payment only if he goes at once, he will attend to the private patient first. This must involve two standards of service.

Another difficulty in connection with the general practitioner service has been the basic salary of £300. It was originally intended that this should be universal, and there is good reason for it as the overheads are proportionately heavier for those starting in practice or those with a small list. But at the request of the profession the basic salary became optional—*i.e.*, determined by the other doctors of the area. As basic salaries are paid from the area pool, the incomes of all doctors in the area are proportionately decreased for every basic salary allowed. This results in very few being permitted in many areas—for instance, only 3 granted out of 32 applied for in Sheffield. It is only right to say that a good many of those refused have been granted on appeal by the Minister; but, though justice may be done thereby, professional harmony is not increased.

General practitioners differ greatly as to their interest and experience in midwifery practice, and while some are first-class obstetricians and are so recognised by their colleagues, others rarely attempt such cases. It was originally intended that those doctors wishing to practice midwifery and to answer calls by midwives for medical aid should apply to a local committee, and only those found suitable by training and experience put on the list. Now, as the result of pressure from the general practitioners, the Minister has decreed that any doctor, even if he has done no midwifery for many years, may tackle such cases and be paid for so doing out of public funds. This is asking for trouble.

It may be argued not unreasonably that concessions to the prejudices of the profession were fully justified, since, without the goodwill of the doctors as a whole, the successful launching of the new Health Service would have been impossible. This is probably correct; but, even so, is it not now time to give careful consideration as to how a more efficient and complete service may be developed? There are several directions in which improvements in the present service are especially needed. (1) It should deal much more with the prevention of disease and development of optimum health; (2) there should be more team work; (3) it should be unified and complete.

The environmental preventive services, drainage, water supply, food inspection and control of infectious disease, are being dealt with on the whole reasonably well by the local authorities. There is much more to be done, however, by way of instruction in the laws of health and stimulation of the will to health. To begin with, we must teach the teachers of schools, colleges, youth clubs, etc. But in addition, every doctor ought to take his part in the prevention of disease and it should be part of his duty not only to treat disease but to seek out its cause and how it can be prevented, both in the individual patient under his care and also in others similarly situated. This can only be carried out properly when the industrial medical service becomes part of the general scheme and when the doctor working from a health centre is in daily contact with clinic doctors, health visitors, midwives, etc., working there, as well as the other preventive services. When time permits the doctor will also encourage his patients to come to him for periodical medical examination. The National Health Service Act proposes that the new health centres should be used for health propaganda by lecture, demonstration, and cinematograph film. But this again implies a salaried service, since such instruction

by doctors who are in competition with one another under a capitation system would be frowned upon as advertising.

The science of medicine has become so complex that no doctor can know all or nearly all there is to be known. It follows therefore that for efficient treatment a team and not an individual is required. But it is equally true that the average doctor is a creature in which the herd instinct is well developed, so that doctors working together invariably discuss their cases to the benefit of all concerned. When general practitioners work together as a team, one or more of them often seems to develop an interest in some special branch of the healing art, so that his opinion is sought by his colleagues for cases of this nature and he becomes a minor specialist in some branch of medicine or surgery. It is from such general practitioners that, after proper training, the ranks of the specialists may in many cases be recruited. But, necessary as all these developments are, it is difficult to see how they could possibly be carried out apart from health centres and a salaried service.

A health service controlled by three entirely separate committees cannot readily be developed as a unified whole—least of all when the 36 teaching hospitals, which should be a directing and stimulating force, are outside the control of either Committee. Some liaison is being secured by joint appointments both of members of committees and medical and other staffs. Thus doctors who deal with the prevention and after-care of tuberculosis under local authorities are often also appointed to deal with the diagnosis and curative treatment of this disease under the regional hospital boards. This process should be developed and increased by associating general practitioners and midwives with hospitals, wherever geographical considerations make this possible. The industrial medical service should also become part of the general medical service and the treatment of school children assimilated to it.

Finally, the democratisation of the health service and the development of organised research in all branches are matters which will need consideration. We have made a good start in the development of a Socialist health service, but have still a very long way to go.

SOMERVILLE HASTINGS

MARKED MEN

THERE is a wide difference of treatment meted out to a young thief in a public school and to his counterpart in another walk of life. Everyone who has spent his life in work among boys knows that a "thieving patch" is a common phenomenon of adolescence. If a boy in a public school goes through such a patch and is detected, he is no longer expelled in disgrace, as he was fifty years ago. If he is lucky enough to have a sane and human housemaster, he is sympathetically treated and helped. If not, or if he seems to be a difficult and complicated case, he is quietly removed from the school and sent to a medical psychologist for treatment, or to a small school specialising in such cases, or sometimes given a new start in another public school. Very different is the fate of a working-class boy who goes through a similar thieving patch, and is caught. From the moment when he first sets foot inside a children's court he is a "marked man," a budding criminal in the eyes of the world at large, a disgrace to his outraged parents, and a bit of a hero to his companions.

It is true that children's magistrates mostly do all they can to make the child feel that he is none of these things; it is true that most Probation Officers treat their charges neither as criminals nor as disgraceful characters; it is true that reformatories are no longer called by that damning name, and that the word delinquent has superseded the harsher term, criminal. Nevertheless, the criminal taint, the disgrace of appearing before a magistrate's court, even a children's court, remain.

Suppose a child continues on his wayward path, and Probation fails and the Approved School fails, as happens far more frequently than it ever ought to do, and the young man finally lands up in a Borstal institution. Then he is marked for life. There is no lasting stigma on a boy who has been on Probation or has been through an Approved School. But there is a definite stigma on a lad who has served a Borstal sentence, a stigma which haunts many an honest man all his life. It is monstrously unfair that this should be the case; for, while there are undeniably many lads in Borstal who have "criminal tendencies" (whatever that may mean), there are multitudes who are not criminals in any sense of the word. But criminals they will for ever be counted so long as Borstal institutions are part of the prison system. For all that is done by many enlightened Borstal housemasters and officers to make a lad feel that he is not a criminal and certainly not a prisoner, the fact remains that the lad regards himself as being both. This state of things is wholly bad.

It is high time that Borstals ceased to be part of the prison system, under the control of the Prison Commissioners and subject to inflexible prison standing orders. In the original draft of the Criminal Justice Bill, as presented to Parliament before the war, it was proposed to take Borstal institutions out of the Prison Commission's control, and place them under a separate Home Office authority. It is hard to understand why this proposal was ever dropped. At present, Borstal service and prison service are one and the same thing. A man enters the service; he can be transferred from Borstal to prison or prison to Borstal at the will of the Prison Commissioners. This is true of the whole Borstal staff, of governors and housemasters as well as of officers, who are, in fact, prison warders and known as "screws" to the inmates.

Now it stands to reason that a man may be a good and efficient prison warder and a useless Borstal officer, and vice-versa. The consequence of the present state of things is that men on a Borstal staff tend to become prison-minded; many of the warder class look upon Borstal institutions merely as sloppy kinds of prisons. Borstal staffs ought to be recruited and trained for Borstal work, as distinct from prison work. They ought to be composed of men who look upon the work as, in some sense, a vocation, and not simply as a civil service job which provides them with a livelihood and a pension. It is true that there are many such men at work in Borstals to-day, but they are in a minority. The Borstal system is no failure. But it could be far less of the limited success that it is if its connection with prison were completely severed, the prison taint entirely removed.

It is perhaps impossible to destroy altogether the stigma on a man who has served a prison sentence for felony, but there need be no stigma attached to a lad who has been through a Borstal training, if he did not count as having been in prison, as he certainly does so count to-day. If Borstals were no longer prison-controlled, it would be possible, in a way in which at present is impossible, for a Borstal lad really, and not theoretically, to be regarded and treated, not as a young criminal and therefore as a bit of a daredevil hero, but as a young man sick of a sickness which has proved itself a nuisance to himself and to society, and who, if he does not respond to treatment and co-operate with his doctors, is just plain silly. There is glamour in the wickedness of crime: there is no glamour in sickness.

The best sort of officers to administer this type of treatment could be found in men who had themselves served a Borstal sentence in their youthful days and who had made good. There ought to be on every Borstal staff a percentage of ex-Borstalites who could talk to a lad in homely language and say: "Here, my lad, I, too, was once sick of your sickness, and a bloody silly and unnecessary sickness I found it to be." Such an approach from such men would prove far more effective than the endless lectures and interviews and exhortations and punishments which the average unfortunate Borstal inmate has endured from the day of his first appearance in a children's court to the day of his arrival in Borstal, and which he continues to endure during his sojourn there. One wonders why the Prison Commissioners have not experimented in this direction on a large scale long ago, for such an experiment would certainly pay good dividends in results. And there must be many ex-Borstalites alive to-day who would be ready and willing to undertake such a job, and who would do it well.

But first, Borstal institutions must be taken out of the control of the prison commissioners, must cease to be part of the prison system, and must be put under the stewardship of a separate Home Office department and be given a new start with a new name. And let a Mark Benney be invited to be one of the first Borstal governors under the new regime.

D. B. KITTERMASTER

I KNEW ALL THE TIME

THE telephone bell rang. I let it go on ringing. At last I lifted the receiver. Before I could utter my non-committal grunt, a voice said: "Just the man I want."

"I knew you would come round to that point of view sooner or later," I replied. But the moment was not one for badinage. "Listen," she said, and proceeded to recite:

> We are the precious chosen few;
> Let all the rest be damned.
> There's only room for one or two:
> We can't have heaven crammed.

"Know it?" she asked.

"Of course."

"Who's it by?"

"It's by. . ." I found I did not know. I had to say I wasn't sure; I would ring her later and tell her.

Butler, I thought. But not in his *Notebooks*. In Festing Jones. Damn! I sold Festing Jones. And I can't fag all the way down to the London Library. If I do, the book is bound to be out. It always is—the book I happen to want—if they have it at all. Besides, I never feel comfortable at the London Library. One of these days, overpunctilious about the lights, I shall be completely and irrecoverably lost in the darkness of the annex to the Foreign State Papers section. Or else I shall slip through a grating. My long-cherished ambition to become so eminent that I can snore with impunity in one of the armchairs before the fire in the reading room of the London Library—that seems as far off realisation as ever.

> We are the precious chosen few. . .

Perhaps not Butler. Is it by any chance Sir Walter ("I wish I loved the human race") Raleigh? Unlikely. Somewhere in George W. E. Russell? Could be. No, not there. But—

> I would I were in Manchester,
> A-sitting on the grass,
> And by my side a bottle of wine,
> And on my lap a lass.

That was worth meeting again. And Walter Pater saying, "Oh, very rich, very handsome, very expensive, I am sure. But they mustn't make any more of them," when asked to admire a wedding present constructed of ormolu and malachite.

We are the . . .

Doesn't it sound a bit Cloughy? After all, he wrote:

Thou shalt not kill; but need'st not strive
Officiously to keep alive.

The telephone rang again. The voice said: "I think it's Pope."

"Pope my foot," I replied. "It's 19th or 20th century. Good-bye."

It might, I then thought, be Oliver Wendell Holmes. "His humid front the cive, anheling, wipes"—that line sprang into my mind, but it seemed to have nothing to do with the case, and anyhow I couldn't find my Holmes. Looking for it, I remembered Clough again.

These are the facts. The uncle, the elder brother, the squire, (a
Little embarrassed, I fancy,) resides in the family place in
Cornwall, of course. . .

Pleasant enough reading. So was

And as I walk on my way, I behold them consorting and coupling;
Faithful, it seemeth, and fond, very fond, very probably faithful. . .

But nothing about the precious few.

Arnold? Improbable. (I have a problem of my own about Arnold. In some connection with him someone—who? when? where?—told the Mediterranean that it was the business of a sea to have tides and not lounge about like an overgrown lake.) Emerson? Hardly. And all those volumes—too, too daunting. Besides, he unnerves me: "Life consists in what a man is thinking of all day." Austin Dobson? Just possible. Belloc's more likely. Yet, somehow, he doesn't click with my memory. A translation of Voltaire? On the whole, no. Perhaps Kellett's *Short History of Religions* would help. But I should have remembered if it were in that.

Hartley Coleridge? Not on your life. Too far back. I'd like to have an excuse, though, for reading him again: "Shakespeare a Tory and a Gentleman"—I must look that up one day.

We are the few, the. . .

Stendhal? Absurd. You might as well say Goethe. I could cheat, of course, and look in the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Though that isn't really cheating: what I want is never in it. This time I may be lucky. Not a hope! Plenty of fews but not my few. "f. and evil have the years" . . . "f. die and none resign" . . . "we f., we happy f." . . . "we are many—they are f." I knew it would be no good. Shall I look under "damned," or "heaven" or "crammed"? Dozens of damneds, innumerable heavens, no crammeds, and naturally nothing of any use to me.

We are the few . . .

Horace Walpole? Chesterfield? Byron? Rogers? Crabb Robinson? If only I had nothing better to. . . Leigh Hunt? Now you're stupid. Why not say Coleridge? Could it be in Haydon? Or Hazlitt or Abraham Hayward? Good stuff in Hayward. He wrote on Stendhal more or less intelligently.

Again the telephone. "Charles thinks it's Churchill."

"Tell Charles he's a fool. Good-bye!"

Churchill, indeed. Why not Asquith or Balfour or Aneurin Bevan? Oh, I see, *Charles* Churchill. Maybe. No, I don't think so. In fact, I'm sure. It's later than him. Hardy? Of course not. But there's something infidelishly or rationalistically satirical about it. Foote? Foote my foot. Ingersoll? It was he who said: "An honest God's the noblest work of man." Huxley? To hell with it!

Using the telephone, I said: "Sorry, extremely mortified, in fact, but I can't tell you who wrote it."

"Philip suggests it sounds like you."

"Ridiculous. Well, goodnight, sleep well, bless you. As you were! Curse you! You've wasted hours of my time. I bet no one has taken half as much trouble for you as I have. Tell me if you do find out who wrote it."

She has not told me yet. PALOMIDES

SO THEY SAY . . .

If newspapers ran golf clubs, some of their staff would be very long-handicap men, for they appear to have great difficulty in mastering the follow-through. In reporting the now-famous rout of the Opposition in the debate on the Health Estimates, for instance, the press gave a lot of space to a clash between the Minister of Health and Sir Henry Morris-Jones, Liberal-National member for Denbigh. Sir Henry, who is a doctor, read out a letter "from a working man" complaining of money wasted in a certain hospital on an expensive boardroom instead of being spent on hospital equipment. Other examples of extravagance were quoted, but Sir Henry refused to say which hospital it was.

It was later identified, however, as St. Mary Abbot's Hospital, Kensington, and the chairman of the local hospital management committee invited Sir Henry to visit it. He did so, and last week there was published a letter which he subsequently wrote to the chairman. "I am quite satisfied," said Sir Henry, "that the money spent on the administration had not been at the expense of efficiency and equipment. . . ." How many of the national papers printed this? Only two—the *Daily Telegraph* and the *News Chronicle*—as far as I can trace.

* * *

A final example, of a slightly different nature, concerns the latest report of the Registrar-General, issued on April 1. This is usually automatically published by all newspapers. The latest report, covering 1948, is particularly interesting, for the death-rate—10.8 per thousand—is the lowest ever recorded in Britain, while the infant mortality rate—34 per thousand—has also fallen below 40 for the first time. Apparently, the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Graphic* thought these figures were not worth printing—an omission of some interest in view of the *Daily Herald's* claim that they "show how great an improvement was brought about by full employment and better feeding, especially among poorer people."

Higher Arithmetic

The afternoon papers' treatment of Mr. Strachey's estimates for the coming year are so full of contradictions as to cast doubts not only upon Fleet Street's powers of simple addition and subtraction, but also upon its ability to copy out figures. The *Star* states quite plainly that "Britain's food for the coming year will cost £409,580,863—an increase of £37,325,726 over last year." Both the *Evening News* and the *Standard*, however, claim that Mr. Strachey's "bulk-buying" will result in "a loss of £388,500,000—£36,250,000 more than in the current year." The differences here are a mere £21,080,863 and £1,075,726 respectively.

The *Standard* and *News* then go on to disagree amongst themselves. They both agree that additional subsidies already announced will bring the real cost up to £426,000,000 (again different from the *Star*), but while the *Standard* states that these additional subsidies total £37,000,000, the *News* adds them up to £37,500,000. The *Standard*, however, makes its figures behave by neatly adding £37,000,000 to £388,500,000 and making the total £426,000,000! But by the time they begin referring to Mr. Strachey's estimates for last year they have completely parted company—the *News* stating that there was a profit of £8,100,000 on tea, and the *Standard* sturdily maintaining that there was a loss of £8,000,000 on tea. . .

Thunder on the Left

Last week the *Daily Mail* was incautious enough to attack the *Daily Worker* over its "sensationalism" editorial without first looking up its own files. Historical research, however, did not die with Karl Marx.

Daily Worker, March 31:

It was the *Daily Mail* which in 1935 ran a campaign in support of Sir Oswald Mosley's Blackshirts in which these unsavoury gentry were depicted as "Britain's only safeguard" against the insanity of Red revolution. . . It was the *Mail* which in 1926 discovered that the General Strike was "a revolutionary movement intended to inflict suffering on the great mass of innocent persons in the community." . . . It was the *Mail* which in September, 1947, printed that famous sentence "When Britain becomes a concentration camp on October 1. . ." [It referred to] the fact that there was a ban on foreign travel to save foreign exchange. . .

The Unsteady Franc

Evening News: KRAVCHENKO WINS £141 DAMAGES.

Star: KRAVCHENKO GETS £150.

Standard: KRAVCHENKO WINS £155 DAMAGES.

AUTOLYCUS

LETTERS FROM TWO ISLANDS

Isle of Wight

. . . Because you must not forget that most of my time now is spent in this other isle, of Wight. (You never saw it, did you, except from the sea? It is the best of Southern England in miniature, with something added, a lightening of the horizon, from the sea.) There are many reasons why I mostly keep down here, more quiet for work, better air and larger views, and so on; but there is also this—that if you own a large farm then you cannot be too often off the spot. I have discovered that running costs pile up in agriculture in the same menacing fashion that they do in the theatre, the great difference being that the stuff they help to produce is more nourishing. So when you receive these scattered observations of mine, please imagine them addressed to you over the backs of a herd of pedigree Guernseys or a flock of fine Dorset Horns.

Give me time, and the ancient wisdom of earth will be perceptible in my remarks. (I would grow a beard if I did not think it would be grey and patchy.) At the moment the situation is that for more intensive and sounder cultivation we need more labour, and for more labour we need more housing, and for more housing we need Aladdin's lamp. What I like best about farming so far is that it has a sensible rhythm, like art and friendship, and quite unlike industry, with its buzzers and electric clocks and production graphs, all of which affront the spirit of man. And even I, bobbing about on my ocean of ignorance, can already talk for hours and hours about

pigs and barley and milk records. But I will not inflict any of it on you if you, in your turn, spare me your campus gossip.

Although I am as weary as you are of their proclamations and denunciations, I do not think you are entirely right about the Russian writers, many of whom I have met and liked. To begin with, something must be allowed for translation, which is often deliberately unfavourable, less than no trouble being taken to find genuine English equivalents of the Russian phrases. Then again—and this does not apply to more Western Communists, who seem to me a different and much sourer breed—much allowance must be made for the Russian background of these writers. We must not think of them (though they make this mistake, too) as men just like ourselves deliberately behaving badly. For example, take this routine optimism that we find so false and boring. Remember that they are Slavs, who if not up are very much down, that Russian literature just before the revolution was bogged down in the blackest pessimism, that they are still addressing a people who have suffered and struggled and see no end yet to their mountainous tasks. Don't forget that the Russians live in a permanent atmosphere of our 1941.

Of course, you and I cannot believe that true art must be something plain for the politicians and the workmen's clubs. There they are miles out—though Tolstoy said most of it first. But we must also remember that neither is true art something new and fancy for rich women and pansies with private incomes. Many of our æsthetic antics look like a mere tickling of jaded palates to them, as indeed they often do to some of us. Where they go wrong—and most of the men I met seemed to me honest in their convictions—is that they cannot believe that somebody is not dictating what we shall do and how we shall do it, and, believing this, they naturally prefer their bosses to ours. What I am certain they cannot understand is that when I, for instance, set to work writing something, I am genuinely *pleasing myself* first of all, and have had no orders, advice, winks and nudges from Messrs. Bevin and Morrison, Federation of British Industries, Barclay's Bank or the Duke of Norfolk. Just as they cannot understand that you can criticise a government sharply and yet be reasonably loyal to it. Or that men may acknowledge the existence of disillusion, bitter irony and sorrow, and yet believe that some social progress is possible. They have lived all their adult lives in quite a different atmosphere. You might as well expect a trout to give you its opinion of a country walk. That is why we ought to be ready to forgive Russian writers much that we cannot forgive in Communist propagandists who have lived nearer the Atlantic, who should not be lost in this fog of cross-purposes, who often, being envious men on the make, deliberately distort values they once understood.

But am I striking my own little match in the fog? I am not. Invitations to attend international conferences keep arriving, and I continue to decline them, whether they penetrate any iron curtains or not. My usual excuse—Too Busy—is not a downright lie; but if I felt I could do any good at these affairs I could probably find time for them. But I feel now we ought to let each other alone for a year or two. I am referring, of course, not to professional conferences, with definite tasks to perform, but to the large vague get-together-in-friendship jamborees. I doubt if I am any more perverse than the next man; yet it is a fact that when I find international understanding and friendship high on the agenda I soon begin to feel gloomily critical and want to go home, far from all these foreigners, whose beards are already beginning to bristle at the sight of me. One of Unesco's more portentous projects, much favoured on your side, is the study of "Tensions affecting International Understanding," and I suspect that this study may be tightening the tensions. What is really needed, of course, is more ordinary foreign travel, which when enjoyed can produce understanding and friendship as sound by-products. If our lives were not hacked about to make things easier for Foreign Offices and Treasuries and Secret Services, if frontiers were opened and the armies of chaps employed along them given some more useful work to do, if we old boys could pop across the sea whenever we wanted to, and youngsters could wander abroad during their vacations, then some glimmer of daylight might soon be seen. More tourists and fewer delegates, more quiet boozing abroad and less proposing and seconding—this should be the cry.

Your February's *Harper's* has only just arrived. I have been reading the article on *Highbrow, Lowbrow, Middlebrow*, which makes some good points, although the argument that these are now taking the place of the social classes seems to me far-fetched. But if we must think in terms of these detestable categories, which have done much mischief to criticism during these last twenty years, then we must not forget, as your *Harper's* man did, the *Broadbrow*. Where he differs from all the other three is that he *does not follow fashion*. The others are always its slaves, and at any time I could undertake to supply the highbrows, lowbrows, middlebrows, with their respective cultural outfits, neatly packaged and complete with a booklet of instructions. But this could not be done for any genuine Broadbrow because he is not to be bullied either by æsthetic snobs or publicity agents, does not care a rap whether an artist is popular or unpopular, but only asks himself what the chap does to him, and so pleases himself. If you doubt this, then I am prepared, as a Broadbrow myself, to submit to your *Harper's* contributor a list of my favourite writers, composers, painters and sculptors, and on the basis of that list I will defy him to find me a place among his highbrows, lowbrows, middlebrows. And I could do the same for half a dozen friends of mine, good Broadbrows all, though these, I will admit, are English, not Americans, and here, I think, we are less inclined to follow fashions but go nosing out our delights like a terrier in a thicket.

By the way, do you ever read Raymond Chandler? I have just devoured a proof of his last story. He fascinates me, chiefly, I think, because he offers me the unusual and pleasing spectacle of a man trying to turn a cheap, popular formula into something much better. He does it, too. He accepts the familiar pattern of the contemporary thriller (American in origin but now largely and badly imitated here, where it does not really belong), the world of corpses, whisky for breakfast, and luscious nymphomaniacs, but illuminates it with a genuine if sour wit and much oblique social criticism. To read him is like cutting into an over-ripe melon and discovering that it has a rare astringent flavour. He reduces the bright Californian scene to an empty despair, dead bottles and a heap of cigarette butts under the meaningless neon lights, much more adroitly than Aldous Huxley and the rest can do; and suggests, to my mind, almost better than anybody else the failure of a life that is somehow short of a dimension, with everybody either wistfully wondering what is wrong or taking savage short cuts to nowhere. Not knowing him (for he is since my time as a Californian visitor), I cannot say if he is conscious of what he is doing, which makes his work all the more fascinating. Try him, and then hope with me that he will not soon be lost to us behind a long Hollywood contract; although in this last story he pours acid by the bucket into the studios and agencies.

Re-reading Sydney Smith, a favourite of mine, I came across his recipe for what he called A Winter Salad. He was very proud of this recipe, and issued a severe warning against any tampering with it. (I will not give it here, but will merely remark that it is a form of potato salad—mashed and sieved potatoes being flavoured with anchovy and other things). Well, we tried it, but could eat only a few mouthfuls. Now this is very odd. Smith was a great gourmet and lived very well at a time when, as I have always imagined, the art of cooking reached its peak. Yet this salad he was so proud of seemed to us, who have had to eat all kinds of muck, almost unpalatable stuff. Its flavour was not too delicate and rare for our nicotine-soaked palates, which would be understandable. On the contrary, it was too strong for us. There is a mystery here. Why, when we can still enjoy Sydney Smith's sense and wit, can we no longer enjoy his Winter Salad? I give it up, salad and all.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

(This begins a new feature by J. B. P.)

The Arts and Entertainment

VIVALDI AND OTHERS

THE Italian masters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have for too long been eclipsed by their German contemporaries. This is a reversal of the situation which prevailed in their own day, when German music was thought provincial, dull, pedantic and stodgy, and all the most exciting stylistic innovations came from Italy, the home of the monodic reform, of opera, of oratorio and of the concerto. Among many reasons for this change in the climate of musical opinion, first place must be given to the realisation, during the nineteenth century, of the overwhelming genius of Bach, together with the undeniable supremacy of German (and Austrian) music during the hundred years or so which ended with the death of Wagner. To this must be added the intensive activities of German musicologists, who have ransacked their libraries, and left little ancient German music, of any interest or value, in obscurity. The Italians, on the other hand, have treated the glories of their past with a characteristic *insouciance*. It is only the other day that Malipiero's collected edition of the sublime works of Monteverdi reached completion. Both inside and outside Italy, an immense amount of fine old Italian music remains almost unknown; what a fuss would have been made, for example, about Steffani's glorious *Stabat Mater* (recently performed by the B.B.C.) if it were the work of a German composer. Even so large and comparatively recent a work as Donizetti's *Requiem* in memory of Bellini, of which an exciting account reaches me from Rome, has almost vanished from view. I never read a study of Mozart without longing to hear at least some scenes from the innumerable operas of Jommelli and Traetta and the other "precursors" of Mozartian opera; indeed, the very word "precursor" arouses our suspicions, for it is not long since we were taught to regard Buxtehude and Schütz merely as precursors of Bach. In recent years, however, Italian scholars have addressed themselves more

seriously to the resuscitation of the Italian past; and if their labours continue equally fruitful, it looks as though certain chapters in our musical histories will need revision. None, perhaps, more than those devoted to the great Venetian, Antonio Vivaldi (*c.* 1675-1741).

So little was formerly known of Vivaldi's life and achievements that the third edition of *Grove's Dictionary* (1927) could polish him off in half a page, as "born Venice, latter half of seventeenth century," adding a few references, mostly disparaging, from Burney and Hawkins. Many people may have wondered how it was that the great Sebastian Bach found it worth while to transcribe for the keyboard no fewer than sixteen of the violin concertos of so slight a composer. But in the very same year (1927) a vast quantity of manuscript material ascribed to Vivaldi came into the possession of the National Library of Turin, to be followed four years later by a second haul. Though not yet fully sifted, dated, or even authenticated, these manuscript volumes are known to contain much of the highest interest. We do not now think of Vivaldi as a theatrical composer; but he wrote and produced over forty operas, of which, previously, only two were extant. But the most important part of his enormous output seems likely to remain that which he produced in virtue of his official position as Maestro (for 36 years, though with frequent absences) of the Ospedale della Pietà. This was one of the four famous Venetian music schools for illegitimate or orphaned girls, of which Charles de Brosses has left us a famous description in one of his *Lettres d'Italie*:

> The Ospedali have the best music here. . . . Indeed they [the girls] sing like angels, play the violin, flute, organ, oboe, 'cello, bassoon—in short no instrument is large enough to frighten them. . . . The performances are entirely their own and each concert is composed of about forty girls. I swear nothing is more charming than to see a young and pretty nun, dressed in white, a sprig of pomegranate blossom behind one ear, leading the orchestra and beating time with all the grace and precision imaginable.

(Just such a female band as this can be seen fiddling away in the gallery in the Munich Pinakothek's wonderful Guardi, the *Gala Concert*, which will shortly be visiting the walls of our National Gallery.) It is evident that the Pietà, like Haydn's establishment at Esterházy, provided an ideal experimental field, above all for the discovery and exploitation of solo and concerted string sonorities.

A selection of Vivaldi's instrumental and religious music is to be given by the Third Programme, in a series of four concerts beginning next Thursday; and last week our appetite was whetted for these pleasures by the inclusion, in a Morley College concert, of the fascinating suite of a dozen "programme" concerto-movements known as *The Four Seasons*. It was often curiously difficult to tell what season we were in; indeed, all four seemed to hold a good deal of what I took for rain; but the level of invention and workmanship remained high throughout the series, which resembled one of those glowing allegorical frescoes which adorn the vaultings and ceilings of Italy. Alfredo Campoli, a particularly fine stylist in music of this period, played with sweetness and remarkable velocity; and Walter Goehr and the Kalmar Chamber Orchestra, though not a single sprig of pomegranate could be seen behind their ears, were appropriately sauve and brilliant by turns. It was intensely enjoyable.

Apart from Schubert's rare and delightful Overture in D major, the rest of the programme proved less rewarding—but it deserved better support than the sprinkling of individuals who made their way to the Central Hall for the occasion. Holst's *Choral Fantasia* may be, as his daughter claimed, one of his greatest works (it has certainly a fine ending), but it is unreasonable to expect an audience to grasp music of this kind without the help of a printed text. There was a Strauss "novelty," a *Divertimento*, written during the recent war and based (like an earlier Suite) on harpsichord pieces of Couperin orchestrated in the thickest and most forceful Teutonic style. Strange that so tasteless a display of power should come from the hand that was to give us, a few years later, the fine-spun tissue of the Oboe Concerto.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

THE SCHOOL OF LONDON

THE time has come when it is no longer meaningless to speak about the modern School of London. Something like the beginnings of a renaissance in the visual arts in this country is now evident beyond a doubt—though one might hear more discussion of it in Paris or New York than in London. Slowly we are producing a tiny group of artists of first-rate intelligence: that is to say, they are truly aware of what might be called the spiritual landscape of our time. This they accept as their natural terrain: to rediscover areas which have already been charted is not part of their intention. There is no marked similarity of style between them. The School of London is remarkable for its variety. It includes, of course, artists who live remote from London and whose attachment to a region is vital to their art. Such artists still make their names in London.

Thus one includes the Constructivists in Cornwall: Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth, and the younger Lanyon and Wells. Again, though not Constructivists, Bryan Wynter, Sven Berlin—one of the best of our younger sculptors—and the draughtsman, David Haughton, work in or near St. Ives. Two excellent drawings by Haughton are on view now in Roland, Browse and Delbanco's exhibition of "Old Sculpture and Modern Drawings."

The values informing the new movement ultimately derive from France, but there are four or five British artists who did the work of importing and adapting; and all deserve a measure of the international repute which one of their number may assuredly claim. Henry Moore is rapidly becoming known to the whole Western world and this great success itself lends encouragement to our younger artists: it begins to demolish our century-old sense of inferiority. But Matthew Smith, Ivon Hitchens, Graham Sutherland and Ben Nicholson should all be known abroad as well. Perhaps Wyndham Lewis, too; his influence on a number of our best younger painters has been potent. Indeed, Lewis is a sort of explosive potential, artistically: he always suggested and communicated a good deal more than he actually expressed. Cerebral though his work was, and is, it contained a formal vocabulary that was an English equivalent for Cubism; and, as such, it was full of suggestions for younger men. In all this Lewis is at the opposite pole to Matthew Smith, who has hardly a single follower. Matthew Smith works out completely all the suggestions which his work contains; for this reason he is not directly useful to others in the way Lewis is; he simply sets a standard of excellence in our midst. No specific formula emanates from him: he merely raises the whole tone of our artistic life.

In many ways Sutherland is our most original painter. He has put a uniquely British and modern imagery at the service of our native Romanticism. But he stimulates more than he satisfies. There is a ragged unfinishedness about his brilliant vision: it is still not, we feel, completely realised, completely expressed. But then such innovation as he brings needs some digesting. I feel more excited about his pictures when recollecting them than when I am actually confronted by them. The *ideas* they represent seem often stronger *as* ideas, in our heads, than when they are embodied in the paint or charcoal that communicated them to us in the first place. As painting they have a rawness here and there: mood overpowers design.

The brilliant individuals I have just mentioned are all a little isolated from one another; the painters in their twenties or thirties whom I must now add to the company of all those comprising the School of London are possibly nearer together in thought. In spite of much that is purely personal in each of them, there seems more in the way of a common feeling, at any rate among certain groups: for instance, MacBryde, Colquhoun, Minton, Vaughan and Craxton. Less linked in any way are Pasmore, Coldstream, Ryan, Le Brocquy, Freud, Bacon, Piper and David Jones. Yet all contribute to the rising School—as did Paul Nash, Frances Hodgkins and Christopher Wood.

The occasion for this rough and ready stock-taking is the second exhibition at Gimpel Fils of Robert Adams, who now takes his place as an interesting abstract sculptor. Since sculptors of vision are even rarer than painters of vision his arrival is most timely. If Adams' first show was too much of a "homage to Moore," he can now be counted as freed from that very understandable domination. In his studies in slender vertical figures, balanced on three "legs," he is completely himself. There is a tall construction in pliant wooden rods that trembles satisfactorily when touched, yet it is not too reminiscent of Calder's "mobiles." His solid carvings in wood are perhaps not quite solid enough. The elongated cones which predominate among his attenuated forms are sometimes a little too *round* in section: one feels that if these figures were altogether a little more squat, their three-dimensional nature might be more strongly emphasised. Adams deals most easily with forms that grow upwards or thrust downwards. Single, very slender, tapering vertical forms like Brancusi's *Bird* or Giacometti's spindly vertibrates are all right; it is when Adams puts two or three thin, vertical forms together in a single figure (and he mostly does this) that one feels that they should each be flattened a bit, and made a little less pole-like. But I may be mistaken about this. In any case these are interesting things.

PATRICK HERON

RADIO NOTES

IT was natural that the pioneers of broadcasting should have turned first to the adapting of existing stage-plays to the new medium and then pass on to work conceived wholly in its terms; and by now the number of good radio plays is already large enough for radio drama to be considered as a respectable and separate branch of the drama as a whole. The next impetus in the exploitation of the microphone seems to me likely to come from the novel. It is significant that, besides the serial dramatisations of *Esmond*, in the Home Service, and of Mr. Brett Young's *My Brother Jonathan*, from Midland, there are at present no fewer than three serial readings of fiction on the air, *Sense and Sensibility* and *Sard Harker* in the Light Programme and *A High Wind in Jamaica* in the Home Service. Of these, the last is the most interesting in its potentialities, for it is being read by the author himself, and Mr. Hughes has always been a pioneer in broadcasting: it was he who wrote the first radio play. For a long time it has been plain that some novels could be adapted to radio with little loss; Mr. Balchin's *The Small Back Room*, it was evident from Mr. Peter Watts's production some months ago, could have been as well written for broadcasting as for the printed page. But we have not yet had the chance of hearing a novel, whether presented in semi-dramatic form like the Sunday night serials, or read by a single reader, that has been written with the listener rather than the reader primarily in mind. There are good reasons for this. The most important, I am convinced, is not financial; as literary agents will tell you, the radio rights of a novel are already valuable enough no longer to be ignored. No, the overriding reason, I think, is the very advantage which the radio would appear to offer the novelist: the immediate and intimate contact with an enormous and multifarious public. It is easy to imagine with what exhibitionistic delight Dickens, had broadcasting existed in his day, would have read the death of little Nell at the microphone and how Trollope might well have presented the Barchester novels on the air before publication in a form not very different

from Mr. Oldfield Box's radio versions. But the contemporary novelist's relation to his public is quite other than that of the Victorians; he is scarcely conscious of his readers since, in the majority of cases, the overwhelming mass of readers is quite obviously unconscious of him. He writes largely in the dark for, unless he is a best-seller, not more than about ten thousand people. And so the very notion of an immediate response from an audience running into millions is chilling to the contemporary writer with literary pretensions. Yet perhaps there is really no need to fear an enormous public. Miss Bowen and Mr. Greene have become best-sellers without lowering of standards; and if the novelist is horrified by the millions of the Light Programme, he can always write for the faithful few hundred thousands of the Third.

But if a novelist took the plunge and conceived his next novel in terms of a listening rather than a reading public, would the result be a novel? Would it stand the test of print? I see no reason why not. More than he realises, the shape of a novelist's work is conditioned by factors which have nothing to do with literature. There was a time when he had to bear in mind the requirements of serial publication; *The Ambassadors* no less than *The Pickwick Papers* is an instance of this. To-day, the length he writes to is a publisher's convention and is not at all inherent in the nature of things. Such non-literary factors produce their own problems; they may also produce otherwise unobtainable beauties. There seems no good reason why this should not be so with the novel written first of all for broadcasting.

WILLIAM SALTER

THE MOVIES

"June Bride," at Warner's
"Cardboard Cavalier," at the Odeon
"The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," at the Rialto
"Road House," at the Tivoli and the New Gallery

June Bride is far the best comedy that has come out of America for many a month. Too often nowadays this romantic wisecracking type of fun falls flat: *The Egg and I*, with Claudette Colbert, tapped and tapped, but never hatched; *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* was so slow and expected in all its developments, that one could only admire the expert little team of actors who laboured charmingly under difficulties. Neither of these films (taken from popular funny books) had at all bad plots, but from their handling gaiety was woefully absent. One laughed now and then, but only because the appropriate button had been assiduously pushed, and damn it, what else was there to do in the circumstances except laugh?

Well, *June Bride* is another of those sophisticated pieces that display the New Yorker out of town, not this time on a chicken-farm or in the homestead where General Lee stopped to water his horses, but in a shopkeeper's home in Indiana, where a wedding is being prepared for. And what preparations! A women's magazine is covering the wedding and comes down in force to make it really representative of American home life. The "June bride" must be prepared for her 5,000,000 readers (I think that was the number). There is snow on the ground; it won't appear in the photographs. The wallpaper and knick-knacks have to be got rid of; the bride's mother has to be slimmed down; sofas have to be sawn in half, cakes baked, a story evolved that will reassure every one of those five million. And then the bride runs off at the last moment, almost spoiling the effect. Luckily for us, Miss Bette Davis edits the magazine, and Mr. Robert Montgomery is her star reporter: their banter, on a satirical or sentimental level, keeps the fun actively working. They give, for this kind of thing, almost perfect performances; especially Mr. Montgomery who, on his home ground, has never acted better. Now why does *June Bride* succeed where the other two films mentioned so obviously fail? They all have the expert actors, the continually amusing let-downs, the sophisticated love affair, and the dash of satire. *June Bride* isn't noticeably more original than the others, but it starts us laughing, and the laughs and the interest go on to the end.

The idiocies of *Cardboard Cavalier*, a would-be English fun-maker about Roundheads and Cavaliers, make an appalling contrast. This film, which is about as funny as the Sunday train service from Marylebone, taps three sources of amusement: (1) Wardour Street language of the "I dost"—"Wertest thou" variety; (2) anachronisms about income-tax, private enterprise and austerity; and (3) Mr. Sid Field. The only glimmer of laughter comes from the last: he might, given the chance, have been funny trying to cross a recalcitrant drawbridge or as a tipsy lady flirting with Cromwell. Those who despair of raising even a grin over this incompetent hotch-potch, may find some diversion in its plea for voting Conservative.

The political effect of walking across Leicester Square from the Odeon to the Rialto could only be to make every cinema-goer vote for an increased Hollywood quota. Being on holiday, I missed *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* when it made its appearance, but here it is six months later, still running, and about to spread to the circuits. Any film with Danny Kaye in it is bound to fascinate, and this one (though no achievement in film-making) has its happy moments and even quarter-hours of delirium.

Jean Negulesco's *Road House* is almost a good film in the tradition of small-town saloons, the kinky boss, the new girl with the bolder look, and the husky ballad in the evenings. Good direction and photography, good acting by Richard Widmark and Ida Lupino; but soon one feels they are being side-tracked, and the film itself as disappointingly fails to clinch or strike out on its own.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Mrinalini Sarabhai at the St. Martin's Theatre

Mrinalini Sarabhai and her Company give a performance of *Bharata Natyam* and *Kathakali*, the two classical dance forms of Southern India. *Bharata Natyam* is mostly devotional. Its form is lyrical and feminine—almost introvert. These dances seem to be offered more as a private prayer than as a public performance. Such elegant rituals are perfectly suited to the sensitive and finished dancing of Mrinalini Sarabhai herself. *Kathakali*, on the other hand, is extravert and masculine, at times a ferocious form. Some of the more fantastic dances recall the *Danses Polovtsiennes* from *Prince Igor*. Parts seem jerky, grotesque and cruel: still, all of it has a curious beauty, possibly because every gesture is so tightly controlled, so brightly polished. Dancers in *Kathakali* are trained for seven or eight years to have an entire control over every muscle in their bodies. Just as Hokusai with a few vivid brush strokes could convey a landscape, a mood, a flight of birds, so the dancers who have perfected this technique use only a few subtle gestures. They do not just mime—they give a characterisation in the round of every human emotion, always with the greatest economy. This company is fortunate in having a magnificent exponent of *Kathakali*, Mr. Chatune Panicker. At first Indian dancing may seem monotonous and unpredictable. Yet one is soon able to differentiate and appraise its subtleties and modulations. Curry is not just hot; there are infinite degrees of hotness, and the flavour is sometimes strong, sometimes delicate, sometimes sweet, sour or salt. A mass of busy detail is comprised within the restricted compass of an Indian dance form. As a language it may seem limited; but its range of expression and inference is enormous. In the same way a slight intonation, a breathing or a change of pitch can endow a few Chinese words with any number of different meanings. Again, like Indian painting, the dancing is two-dimensional, seldom composed in terms of space. Within this limitation the gamut of Indian dancing is often greater than that of Classical Western ballet. (The sameness of mime in *Swan Lake* for instance must seem very flat to Oriental eyes.) Whether one is in a position to appreciate the niceties or not, a performance of this sort of dancing is a rewarding experience, especially if the level is high—and at the St. Martin's Theatre the level is high.

Correspondence

COMMUNISM IN FRANCE

SIR,—How can the author of your article "Peace and Propaganda" assert that in France Communism has received a serious setback?

In the first round of the cantonal elections this year the French Communist Party had 1,689,764 votes (23.54 per cent. of the total), against 1,535,194 votes (22.37 per cent.) in the same districts at the last cantonal elections in 1945. In the second round, it gained another 87,500 votes. From the position of second party in these rural and semi-rural districts in 1945, it advanced to first place in 1949.

If anything suffered a serious setback, it was the capitalist variety of democracy. With nearly 25 per cent. of the total vote, the Communist Party received only 2 per cent. of the seats. It took 100,000 votes to elect a Communist, 16,400 to elect an MRP candidate, 11,200 a Socialist and 5,200 a Gaullist. The French workers and poorer peasants, in fact, received a remarkable lesson in the way Socialist-Gaullist-M.R.P. "electoral geometry"—introduced in place of P.R. during the last two years—deprives them of the right of electing whom they please.

The lesson was all the more striking because, during the cantonal elections, there was a municipal by-election in the working-class district of Issy-les-Moulineaux, where P.R. still exists. Here the Communists won 45.5 per cent. of the total vote (against 40.6 per cent. at the last election in October, 1947), and a proportionate number of seats. Immediately the French press began talking about the need for changing the rules here too—so that the Socialists, Gaullists and M.R.P. could put into effect electoral blocs against the Communists, as they did throughout the country in the cantonal elections.

It is more than probable that the economic aid from American mentioned in your article encouraged such arrangements against the party which speaks for the overwhelming majority of the French industrial workers and for increasing numbers of the French poorer peasants. The encouragement will doubtless be also available for further electoral jugglery in the same sense. But why imagine that this will inflict setbacks on Communism, rather than on respect for and illusions about the capitalist form of democracy—particularly now that unemployment is joining the list of Marshall exports from the U.S.A.?

39 Hillway, N.6. ANDREW ROTHSTEIN

THE CHURCH IN BULGARIA

SIR,—Mr. Padev did not (and he cannot) answer any of the questions which were put to him in my previous letter. He did not (and he cannot) give a single example of the churches in Bulgaria being closed down, of church activities or church publications being suppressed, of any Bulgarian citizens being denied equal rights, freedom and security to profess and practice their religion, etc. Instead of giving any example in support of his allegation about a religious persecution, or an "offensive" having been launched in the middle of 1948, Mr. Padev refers to his own version of the new Law on the Churches, adopted in Bulgaria on February 24th, 1949.

In doing this, he carefully avoids mention of Articles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 26 and 27, which guarantee freedom and security of churches and believers. While the Law carries out the separation of the Church from the State (Arts. 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 20 and 30), according to Mr. Padev's "version" of the Law, the churches become "mere branches of the State administration." Mr. Padev has not (and he cannot) quote any Article in support of this statement. He asserts that, according to his "version of the law," the governing boards of the churches are "responsible only to the Communist Minister for Religion." (Incidentally, there is no such Minister.) But how can he explain the fact that, according to the Law itself, the churches are not "responsible only to the Minister," and are independent in their organisation and self-government, canons, dogmas, statutes, services, rites, meetings, processions, congresses, conferences, formation and

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In the second number of the bigger Leader Magazine Patric Dickinson and David Low deal with Kingsley Martin; R. W. Thompson asks "Are we as poor—or as rich—as people say"; Ivor Brown writes the diary of One Man's Week; a K.C. analyses the Seddon Murder; Tom Driberg brings Hansard to life; Edgar Anstey challenges Wardour Street and Raymond Postgate discusses the Common Sense of Wine Drinking—7 out of 15 features, and all

SOMETHING BETTER TO READ IN

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election of governing boards, disciplinary councils, collecting revenues and making expenditures, budgets, formation of societies for religious and moral purposes? (Arts. 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 20 and 30.)

In Mr. Padev's "version" of the Law, the Minister can alter church statutes, dismiss any priest who criticises Communist regulations, send to penal servitude any churchmen who speak or write against the Communist policy. But in the law itself there is nothing of the sort in the relevant Articles.

The punishment, for example, envisaged in the law, for failure to comply with Article 28 (and not Article 30) is not "penal servitude," as "freely" translated by Mr. Padev, but "imprisonment," and it is not imposed by the Minister but according to the law of criminal procedure of the country. Article 18 (and not Article 19) is not intended to make "Communist propaganda obligatory for all churches," as Mr. Padev discovers, but on the contrary—to avoid improper reference to the State organs and administration in a Socialist State, which is separate from the Church, and in which the citizens (whom the State represents), are entitled to hold whatever religious views they like, or to hold none.

There are various methods of taking a stand on any problem. Disapproval of the present Bulgarian régime, for example, may come as a result of certain facts and developments in that country. Our experience up to now, however, shows that Mr. Padev's method is different. In his case, it is the "facts and developments" that come as a result of his disapproval of the present Bulgarian régime. And despite this, Mr. Padev makes the bold suggestion that I should give more credit to his personal speculations about the alleged dismissal of the former Bulgarian Exarch than to the authentic and authoritative statement on the Exarch's resignation given by the Holy Synod on September 8, 1948—which Mr. Padev labels a "Communist assertion." In vain Mr. Padev hopes that the only thing needed to refute a fact or an authoritative statement is to label it "Communist." In vain he invokes the spirit of Wellington to avoid the impression that it is not the position of the Bulgarian churches which is in fact involved in our discussion, but Mr. Padev's way of presenting that position.

BORIS TEMKOV
Press Attaché
Legation of The People's Republic of Bulgaria.

RITUAL MUTILATION

SIR,—I am not a medical man, but I have been a Sudan Government official for some twenty-nine years, nearly ten of which I spent in one district—almost, if not quite, a record tenure of office—and I did get to know, probably as well as did many of the doctors and nurses, the people, including the women of all ages, in my district.

I would not attempt to deny the existence of the custom in the Northern Sudan, since the Pharaonic form is practised there as also it is in many other parts of the world, nor would I minimise the dire results which ensue from it, and still less would I write a word which might render less effective constructive suggestions for its earliest possible eradication from a land and people in which I have served and whom I have loved.

There are, however, two points in Critic's comments to which I should draw the attention of your readers. First, the memorandum to which he referred was written in 1944 by a retired Government official whose factual data, in view of her experience as Principal of the Midwifery School in Omdurman, was, until she retired in that year, undoubtedly correct. In the Sudan, however, as in many other parts of the world, things do not stand still and a great improvement in this matter, at least in urban centres, has been achieved since 1944. Secondly, his views as to the reasons for the custom and his suggestions for its eradication are much more debatable: for instance, while he appears to consider that the prime object of attack should be the man, I am convinced that the objective must be the women. It is neither the girls nor the mothers, let alone the men, who are responsible for the persistence of this deep-rooted custom, but it is the grandmothers who have the final say as to the necessity for the operation and the form it shall take.

The two practical suggestions for the eradication of the custom which Critic sets forth would, in my opinion, if carried out, have the very opposite effect from that intended. The custom would be driven even more underground than it is at present by any requirement that the operation should be carried out at hospitals—where all the accompanying ritual so dear to grandmother could not take place. A campaign in the United Kingdom Parliament and Press to publish the facts, again, in my opinion, can only result in embittering the Sudanese men who may hear of it and may encourage amongst them an anti-British feeling against interference by a foreigner, a sentiment which since 1898 and up to the present time, has been almost absent in the Sudan. In any case, such a campaign could not reach the ears of the grandmothers.

There are again in my view only two possible solutions—the first immediate but, I fear, fantastic; the second long-term and, I think, practical and certain in time to produce the results aimed at by all well-wishers of the Sudanese. The first—a massacre of existing grandmothers—need not be discussed, but the latter is, I suggest, alike constructive and would, in all probability, appeal to the Executive Council and Legislative Assembly of the Sudanese—increased provision for girls' education (including teaching on the dire results of this practice) and midwifery services should be made at once so that in course of time the grandmother of to-morrow will herself not permit the custom.

R. C. MAYALL,
Sudan Agent in London

SIR,—May I correct two printer's errors in my letter of last week? The omission of several words made hay of African geography. The Kikuyu and Masai are not West African Negroes, but Bantus of the Eastern half of the continent. *Fetura* was a misprint for *fetwa*.

H. N. BRAILSFORD

THE COST OF DYING

SIR,—In stating that "something like ninety million 'industrial' (i.e., burial) insurance policies are held by the people of this country . . ." Mr. C. H. Rolph, in his article "The Cost of Dying," repeats a common error concerning the industrial assurance industry.

While its origins were founded on funeral expense assurance, the industry no longer exists mainly to transact this type of business. Other forms of life assurance, notably endowment assurance, have been growing steadily for a quarter of a century. To-day, less than 30 per cent of the premiums collected are in respect of funeral expense policies. In some offices, endowment forms well over 75 per cent of the new business.

GEO. WILLIAMS
Secretary.
Industrial Life Offices' Association.

[Mr. C. H. Rolph writes: "I took the figure from *Burial Reform and Funeral Costs*, by Sir Arnold Wilson and Professor Hermann Levy, who quote the 1936 *Industrial Assurance Statistical Summaries*. They add: 'Apart from the fact that insurance offices have done little or nothing to interfere with the multiplicity of policies, there remains the fact that every single policy involves potential over-expenditure on funerals.' The companies may have stopped calling it burial insurance, but the situation seems very similar."—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

THE FILM CRISIS

SIR,—Certain people in the film business have been spreading the idea that the restoration of the Renters' Quota would be contrary to the Geneva Agreement on trade barriers. This is not the case, though there is little doubt that the American film chiefs would claim that it was—in the same way that they protested at the now dwindling 45 per cent Exhibitors' Quota. There is an over-riding clause in the Agreement that stipulates that the internal economy or status of any industry in any of the signatory countries shall not be unfairly prejudiced by the Agreement.

NORMAN ADEY
2 Harley Road, N.W.3.

WORLD PEACE CONGRESS

SIR,—The International Co-ordinating Office of Intellectuals for Peace and the Women's International Democratic Federation have taken the initiative in calling the World Congress for Peace, which will be held in Paris from April 20th-23rd.

The rising tension in world affairs is causing a most serious threat to peace. The means of mass communication are being used to prepare public opinion for a new war. Armies and armaments are being reconstituted and built up at terrifying speed, and military blocs are being formed. In some countries fighting has already begun.

A new war will spread desolation on a yet vaster scale, and all that the ordinary man, woman and child expects from life will be lost. The advances in political freedom, in the development of social services, and the growth of the welfare State, will be destroyed. Art and science will be crippled.

The World Peace Congress will make every effort in its power to rally the huge reserve of feeling and passion for peace, in defence of the achievements of human progress. Religious, cultural and workers' organisations from every corner of the earth have already pledged their support. It is of the greatest importance that a strong delegation, worthy of this country, should participate in the Congress.

The British Cultural Committee for Peace (formed following the World Congress of Intellectuals in 1948) has accepted responsibility for arranging the British delegation. In this effort, we would welcome active support, both by participation and by financial aid.

Anyone desiring further information about the Congress or wishing to send a donation should write to The British Cultural Committee for Peace, 5 Court House, Hoopers Court, Basil Street, London, S.W.3. J. G. CROWTHER, *Chairman*

INCURABLE EGYPTOMANIA

SIR,—The case has been admirably diagnosed by Mr. Jon Kimche in your issue of March 26; may I, however, as one who lived in Egypt for 20 years, suggest a possible explanation of Whitehall's latest relapse into Egyptomania?

What a great number of Englishmen and foreigners, and not a few far-sighted Egyptians, predicted at the time of Evacuation Fever is probably happening now: the Pashas want the British soldiers back to protect them and their privileges against the starving masses of the people who at last are being told that the land they till ought to belong to them. With few exceptions these Pashas joined in the "evacuation" cry only to save their skins; recent events must have shown them that the English frying pan is a safer place than the fire of Egyptian nationalism.

These Pashas are the people whom the British Ambassador and his senior officials know and meet at official receptions and parties or in the privacy of the Mohamed Aly Club into whose aristocratic seclusion no one may intrude, least of all any dangerous nationalist have-nots. The British Embassy does not throw open its gardens to entertain sufraghis and doorkeepers as the Soviet Embassy used to do before Egypt's Purge.

Is it therefore surprising that Whitehall thinks Britain can do what she pleases in Egypt and still be liked if the British Ambassador has been listening to the fears and anxieties of Egypt's ruling class—the only class he knows? FARIDA TANI

MR. CHURCHILL—CAD?

SIR,—If Mr. Churchill is reported correctly, he stated in a farewell interview to the massed battalions of American reporters on the *Queen Mary* that he had enjoyed his visit to their country because "*It was nice to get a square meal sometimes.*"

Could caddishness, coupled with misrepresentation, go further? Does Mr. Churchill, with thick cigar in mouth and figure that neither before nor after the war years was ever sylph-like, wish to pretend to America that there are not at the moment a dozen of hotels and restaurants in London where it is possible for a well-off man (with quite legal extra charges for oysters and so forth) to eat himself sick twice a day? HUBERT GRIFFITH

JURIES BILL

SIR,—The Juries Bill will shortly become law and it is already too late to make any major changes in the Bill. Nevertheless it is not inopportune, whilst welcoming the provisions which provide for payment of jurors and for the abolition of special juries except for commercial cases in the City of London area, to draw attention to the fact that the property qualification for common jurors has not been abolished. Few people realise that about 95 per cent of the adult population are ineligible for service on an ordinary jury and an even higher percentage of the women, since they are seldom the official occupier of premises. An all-party amendment to make all on the voters' list eligible for jury service, supported by nearly one hundred members, was ruled out of order by the chairman of committee.

The Government has missed a great opportunity to make the statement "trial by one's peers" a reality and so forever end the situation where an accused person may appear before a jury not one of whom may have any knowledge of his or her way of life and economic background.

ELIZABETH A. ALLEN
General Secretary,
The National Council for Civil Liberties.

APPARITIONS

SIR,—Owing to the unfortunate omission of Dr. Gordon Jacob's name from the first night programme of the revival of the ballet "Apparitions" at Covent Garden your crtitic has paid me the great compliment of crediting me with the orchestration of Liszt's music. As this misapprehension has occurred before may I try and get the facts put right?

My task in "Apparitions" consisted in writing the scenario, choosing the music, and welding the two together. The orchestration, rightly described by your critic as "pyrotechnical," is entirely the work of Dr. Gordon Jacob, whose orchestrations for the ballet are, of course, famous. CONSTANT LAMBERT

PRINCE CONSORT

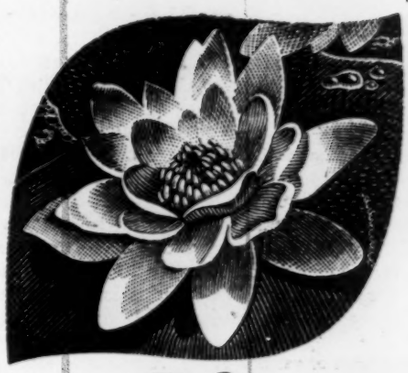
SIR,—In the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION of April 2nd, Mr. Ralph Partridge says that the Prince Consort married Queen Victoria for her money and that "he was not the least in love with her." While I admire the characteristic robustness of this point of view, I should like your readers to know that there is some historical justification for holding a contrary opinion. Writing to the Queen shortly before marriage the Prince said: "Love of you fills my whole being." Writing of the Prince to Sir Robert Peel the Queen said: "He is so good and kind and loves me for myself." ROGER FULFORD

"THE QUEEN OF SPADES"

SIR,—Your film critic, William Whitebait, is wrong in surmising that "The Queen of Spades" never attracted a French producer. I do not remember who he was, but, when living in France about 1935, I saw a most excellent and exciting version of this story—under the title "Pique Dame"—with Pierre Blanchar as the captain and (I think) Francoise Rosay as the old Countess. Doubtless Mr. Whitebait can check up on the details. RALPH CUSACK
Co. Wicklow, Eire.

DR. ANTON SCHARNAGL

In our issue of October 16, we published an article by a Correspondent entitled "Oktoberfest, 1948," which, in discussing the unsatisfactory character of some de-Nazification inquiries, referred to the case of Dr. Anton Scharnagl, Auxiliary Bishop of Munich, who was charged with collaborating with the Gestapo. We have since been in communication on this case with Dr. Scharnagl's brother, the Mayor of Munich, and with the secretariat of Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich. The Cardinal himself appeared before the competent law-court as the most important witness for the defence. The evidence against Dr. Scharnagl rested on the word of Gestapo agents who later unreservedly withdrew these political charges. Thereupon the Trial Tribunal acquitted Dr. Scharnagl and dismissed all the charges made against him. We are glad to publish these facts about the rehabilitation of the Auxiliary Bishop Dr. Scharnagl and thus to correct the impression which may have been left by our Correspondent.



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BOOKS IN GENERAL

THE rehabilitation of Leigh Hunt has been a slow, desultory process. Mr. Edmund Blunden's frankly partisan biography may be said to have followed up the work started by Hunt himself in the *Autobiography* which he published in 1850 and which has now been reprinted in an admirably scholarly edition.* If historians of literature have shown themselves reluctant to disperse the cloud which has hung over Leigh Hunt for so long, the reason must be partly because he was so tireless an advocate for his own cause, and partly because—despite brilliant gifts—he is after all a marginal figure. In an age which was crowded with men of various genius Hunt never succeeded in holding the centre of any canvas. He has no claim to greatness, either as a man or as a writer: he was picturesque, exasperating, childish, imaginative and very clever. His devotion to poetry was profound; he loved the highest when he saw it; yet his own poetry is seldom distinctly successful. *The Story of Rimini* is full of beautiful things, but as a whole it is wearisome and its faults are absurd. On the other hand, his sonnets on fish could scarcely be better. He had a novelist's eye for character and idiosyncrasy; whether it was a fish-face goggling up to him in an aquarium, or a comic jailor trying to get money out of him in return for preferential treatment, Hunt saw what was important. There was nothing wrong with his heart, which invariably attracted him to all that is most admirable in human beings. It was his head which was at fault, and frequently.

The lack of common sense which landed Hunt in so much trouble was perhaps inseparable from his gifts; had he not at all times been capable of distributing indiscriminate sympathy, of showing a boyish precipitancy and lack of measure, it is unlikely that he would have appreciated as thoroughly as he did the men of genius with whom he was thrown (or threw himself), and still more unlikely that he would have left us such invaluable portraits of them. For none of their other contemporaries wrote so roundly and convincingly of Shelley, Wordsworth, Keats, Lamb, Hazlitt, and even Carlyle, as Leigh Hunt managed to do. His relations with all his friends (except Shelley) were unstable, because his own nature was ill-balanced; but there is nothing like a precarious relationship for sharpening the perceptions. The hard things which Hunt wrote of Byron, not long after the Italian fiasco, were unfair, and expressed with an hysterical emphasis which robbed them of plausibility; but they were founded on a knowledge of some of the worst in Byron's character.

On the other hand, those who, like Mr. Blunden and Mr. Morpurgo, take it upon themselves to champion Leigh Hunt, appear to me to overlook the provocation he offered—and not only to Byron. It is all very well to say, as Mr. Blunden says, that Hunt "was essentially a man of peace [who] was always in the wars." There is a contradiction here, as to which I shall call Hazlitt in evidence. "Those who are loudest and bitterest in their complaints of persecution and ill-usage are the first to provoke it." Nobody is "always in the wars" with other people unless he is always in the wars with himself. It is the inward dis-ease that projects itself on to others, to appear there as gratuitous aggression. From the first, Leigh Hunt assumed the role of privileged person—which might have been all right if only he had acted conformably with the notion. It seems he could not do so. He must needs complain, and cast aspersions, and impute motives; which was felt to be too much. "If our friends render us services," said Vauvenargues, "we think that they owe them to us in the name of friendship, and we forget that they do not owe us their friendship"—a truth the subtlety of which evidently escaped Leigh Hunt.

It was this constant pugnacity, and a levity in money matters, combined with angry amazement when others forgot his trespasses less readily than he did himself, that aroused the hostility of quite amicable people like Crabb Robinson. Even Severn accused Hunt of "fleecing" Keats; which seems unlikely on the face of it, but reflects the general annoyance. Harold Skimpole is plainly a caricature, and a malicious one, though Dickens himself confessed to having intended a straight portrait; but it is unnecessary to go as far as this in order to see what was irritating about Leigh Hunt. A reviewer has recently committed himself to the statement that Hunt never lost a friend. Yet Byron certainly started as a friend; so did Haydon; and Hunt lost them both, because he forfeited their respect.

It is impossible to absolve Byron of all blame for the relative failure of Hunt's sojourn at the Casa Lanfranchi. He was in an irritable mood at the time and ended by behaving callously. On the other hand, Shelley is, in my view, even more to blame, for the heedless impetuousity with which he rushed Byron into inviting the Hunts. We know, from other instances, what Shelley could be like on such occasions. Nor did he behave consistently, though Mr. Blunden, who quotes the letters, seems to overlook the fact. Writing to Hunt about the arrangements for his reception, Shelley says: "I did not ask Lord Byron to assist me in sending a remittance for your journey; because there are men, however excellent, from whom one would never receive an obligation in the worldly sense of the word." Four months later we find Shelley writing in a very different strain. "Lord B. had kindly insisted upon paying the upholsterer's bill"—*i.e.*, for doing up the Hunts' apartment in his palace—"with that sort of unsuspecting goodness which makes it infinitely difficult to ask him for more. . . ." Ask for more, however, he eventually did (at Hunt's instance); obtaining £200!

Possibly, if Shelley had lived, he might have prevented the breach, for he always had a restraining influence on Byron. But he could not have prevented (though he might have foreseen) the effect on Byron of Marianne Hunt, which may, I think, not unfairly be described as loathing-at-first-sight. Mrs. Hunt was not exactly a stupid woman, but she was oddly insensitive in a manner destructive of respect, though not perhaps of pity. But pity, however mingled with other feelings, is not a possible basis for friendship. Many people, including Mrs. Carlyle, were too sorry for the Hunts to like them, and were furthermore exasperated by Marianne's habit of borrowing domestic utensils and then refusing to return them.

In fact, critics have paid too little attention to the unfortunate effect of his wife's character upon Leigh Hunt's personal legend—an effect which must, one feels, have been aggravated by a certain fund of frivolity in the man himself, and by his evident willingness to tell people home truths. In a long letter to Hunt from Jane Williams, in which she discusses a tedious imbroglio with Mary Shelley, Jane observes: "I differ from you entirely as to the necessity of my telling Mary her faults: for I feel convinced I should only make her unhappy while I should fail to produce the desired effect. That task I leave to you, my dear friend, *who are so well able to correct human follies and to drop a tear of pity on human weaknesses*—in me it would be arrogance and presumption." (Italics mine.) This piece of sarcasm, coming as it does from an exceptionally sweet-tempered woman, gives some hint of Leigh Hunt's priggishness and the vexation it caused.

The *Autobiography*, however, is a disarming book, for in it Hunt shows a rare, if tardy, self-knowledge. By the end of his life he had learnt wisdom, corrected certain notions of himself and others, and retired, gracefully enough, from a number of untenable positions. Sprawling, chatty, and discursive as De Quincey—though less liable to go off at a tangent—Leigh Hunt in old age was almost the ideal autobiographer, for he had no reserves about himself and, when describing his friends, could always be trusted to know what would interest his reader:

> Fuseli was a small man, with energetic features, and a white head of hair. Our host's daughter, then a little girl, used to call him the white-headed lion. He combed his hair up from the forehead; and as his whiskers were large, his face was set in a kind of hairy frame, which, in addition to the fierceness of look, really gave him an aspect of that sort. Otherwise, his features were rather sharp than round. He would have looked much like an old military officer, if his face, besides its real energy, had not affected more. There was the same defect in it as in his pictures. Conscious of not having all the strength he wished, he endeavoured to make up for it by violence and pretension. He carried this so far as to look fiercer than usual when he sat for his picture. His friend and engraver, Mr. Houghton, drew an admirable likeness of him in this state of dignified extravagance. He is sitting back in his chair, leaning on his hand, but looking ready to pounce withal. . . . Agreeably to this overwrought manner, he was reckoned, I believe, not quite so bold as he might have been. He painted horrible pictures, as children tell horrible stories; and was frightened at his own lay-figures. Yet he would hardly have talked as he did about his terrors had he been as timid as some supposed him. With the affected, impression is the main thing, let it be produced how it may. A student of the Academy told me that Mr. Fuseli coming in one night, when a solitary candle had been put on the floor in a corner of the room, to produce some effect or other, he said it looked "like a damned soul." This was by way of being Dantesque, as Michelangelo was. . . .

Leigh Hunt's account of Christ's Hospital is probably the best ever given—an extraordinarily vivid picture of school life which would be the envy of a novelist; and the prison episode is described with cheerful humour and an absence of rancour that show how far Hunt had come in thirty years. Most of all to his credit, perhaps, are the chapters in which he corrects the evil impression made by his earlier account of Byron, written in the heat of resentment.

All his life Hunt suffered from ill-health, which in a measure explains the capriciousness of his temper and his propensity to take advantage of an excessive sensibility. The conclusions he drew from his experience of suffering are interesting in themselves and a tribute to the qualities of heart which he had always maintained:

> That the value of cheerful opinions is inestimable; that they will retain a sort of heaven round a man, when everything else might fail him; and that, consequently, they ought to be religiously inculcated in children.
>
> That evil itself has its bright, or at any rate its redeeming, side; probably is but the fugitive requisite of some everlasting good; and assuredly, in the meantime, and in a thousand obvious instances, is the admonisher, the producer, the increaser, nay, the very adorner and

* *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt.* Edited, with an Introduction and notes, by J. E. Morpurgo. *The Cresset Press.* 9s. 6d.

Dr. Bradley *v.* Prof. P. M. S. Blackett

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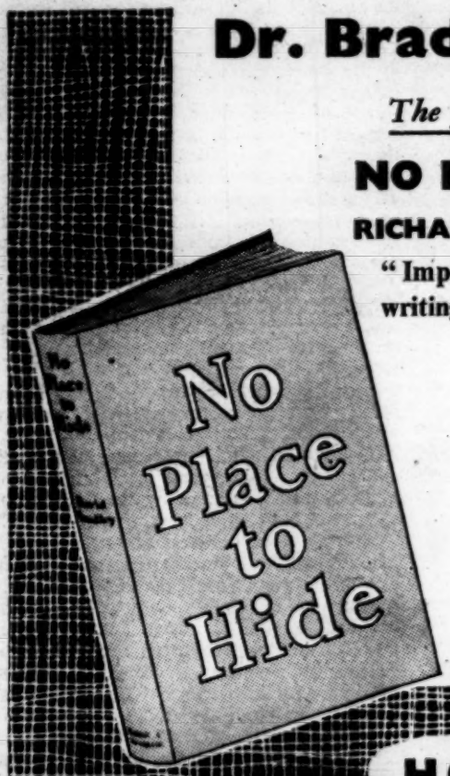

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splendid investitor of good; it is the pain that prevents a worse, the storm that diffuses health, the plague that enlarges cities, the fatigue that sweetens sleep, the discord that enriches harmonies, the calamity that tests affections, the victory and the crown of patience, the enrapturer of the embraces of joy.

The muffish optimism which sometimes irritated his friends and which slightly mars the final chapter of the *Autobiography*, has its touching side. It helped, too, in the making of a truly admirable prose style—the easy, wide-ranging flow of a born talker—midway between the hail-fellow cosiness of Lamb and the thrust and glitter of Hazlitt's rapier. Here, for example, is the description of a legendary figure in Hunt's school life:

> The Fazzer was known to be nothing more than one of the boys themselves. In fact, he consisted of one of the most impudent of the bigger ones; but as it was his custom to disguise his face, and as this aggravated the terror which made the little boys hide their own faces, his participation of our common human nature only increased the supernatural fearfulness of his pretensions. His office as Fazzer consisted in being audacious, unknown, and frightening the boys at night; sometimes by pulling them out of their beds; sometimes by simply *fazzing* their hair ("Fazzing" meant pulling, or vexing, like a goblin); sometimes (which was horriblest of all) by quietly giving us to understand, in some way or other, that "the Fazzer was out," that is to say, out of his own bed, and then being seen (by those who dared to look) sitting or otherwise making his appearance, in his white shirt, motionless and dumb. It was a very good horror, of its kind. The Fazzer was our Dr. Faustus, our elf, our spectre, our Flibbertigibbet, who "put knives in our pillows and halters in our pews." He was Jones, it is true, or Smith; but he was also somebody else—an anomaly, a duality, Smith and sorcery united. My friend Charles Ollier should have written a book about him. He was our Old Man of the Mountain, and yet a common boy.

This is a style which reminds us that its practitioner was the son of American parents. Hospitable, expansive, in the good sense democratic, it is in the best tradition of the higher journalism. If he had been alive to-day, Leigh Hunt would have made an ideal purveyor of "Books in General" to this journal.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

THE RUSSELL FAMILY

Family Background. By GLADYS SCOTT THOMSON. *Cape.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

An aristocracy, said de Tocqueville, is inconceivable without hereditary lands, and the history of the English aristocracy, in so far as it is important, is largely a history of their property. For three hundred years they have accumulated it, and by elaborate devices insured it against their own intermediate extravagance; and in the height of their prosperity obedient annalists flattered them with exaggerated virtues and invented genealogies. Now, when taxation is at last unburdening them, more critical historians are assessing their more solid assets. Cecils and Russells, Cavendishes, Montagus and Churchills—they were not a ruling class for nothing, and they deserve something more than the subservient snobbism of their eighteenth-century chaplains or the frustrated tirades of nineteenth-century radicals.

Her two books, *Life in a Noble Family* and *The Russells in Bloomsbury* have already established Miss Scott Thomson as the historian of the Russell family. In this new volume she surveys them not as a political dynasty but as trustees—almost as servants—of their accumulated estates. Four chapters are devoted to the fabric and maintenance of four great properties. First in order of time are the Dorset and Somerset estates, the origin of the family before it had spread into its titular lands in Bedfordshire and Devonshire. Most of these were sold by John Russell, first Earl of Bedford, to finance his lucrative career at the court of Henry VIII, but one estate, the manor of Berwick in Dorset, has remained continuously in the family, who twice, at distant intervals, have dreamt of returning thither. Then there is Chenies in Buckinghamshire, which reached them by marriage and served the first earl as a residence before it served his successors as a mausoleum. Afterwards came Thorney Abbey, passing from the monks through a nephew of Thomas Cromwell to the first earl. There William Lord Russell of Thornhaugh conceived the vast draining projects which his son was to carry out; but the reunion of the two branches of the family caused Thorney to relapse, like Chenies, into a secondary property, a mere home-farm serving Woburn with fish and game, until an extravagant eighteenth-century Duke sought briefly to revive it. Finally, there is Woburn, first built by Francis, the fourth earl, and rebuilt, in the great age of rebuilding, the mid-eighteenth century, by the fourth Duke.

From rentals and inventories, patent rolls and close rolls, family letters and tradesmen's bills, Miss Scott Thomson has reconstructed the history of these estates and their houses, which seem so much solider than their casual occupants, and in so doing she finds new historical points to make. Froude's Protestant prejudices, Round's genealogical malice are alternately corrected by new evidence. The first countess was not a severe Protestant—she desired that her funeral be ordered at the discretion of "my lord abbot of Westminster"; and the first earl's grandfather was not a bargee but a substantial shipowner of Weymouth, a busy merchant and useful servant of the Crown. By examining property-deeds and tracing the Russells under their alternative name of Gascoigne, Miss Scott Thomson has recovered their early history, and suggests that they may have come to England as Gascon immigrants in the fifteenth century. Thus new evidence, skilfully interpreted, continues the endless process of historical revision, and even the best old historians are replaced, not necessarily by better but by newer writers.

Observing a dynasty as a whole, as the hereditary servants of their property, we judge them by a new standard. Who were the most successful of the Russells in the service of their estates? Not the merely political leaders, in whom the family has been so rich, from William Lord Russell, the proto-martyr of the Glorious Revolution, to Lord John Russell, its indefatigable recollector; perhaps not even the first earl, the one-eyed Lord Privy Seal of Henry VIII, who amassed that vast property by unremitting politics in the great days of the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Two figures stand out in this history: Francis the fourth earl, and John the fourth duke, the builder and the rebuilder of Woburn. The rebuilding of Woburn between 1747 and 1761 fills a whole chapter, and we see the great house being gradually and expensively reconstructed under the supervision of the Duke's surveyor, Thomas Moore—stones coming from Dunstable in ducal carts, slates from Westmorland by sea, sunk baths as at Wilton, a grotto as in the Wallenstein Palace at Prague, ceilings by an Italian artist, novel chandeliers and newly designed waterclosets as at Welbeck, only in the garden and for the private use of His Grace. The total cost of the work was £84,970 6*s.* 8*d.* But the other great builder, the fourth earl, remains even here a shadowy and therefore fascinating figure. He, too, succeeded to a shaken property—only his father had ransomed it from overwhelming debt—but in spite of his building he died in opulence. All his affairs prospered. He sank £100,000 in draining the fens; even the church which Inigo Jones built for him in Covent Garden, "plain as a barn," raised the rents of his London property; he devised the

excise with which his agent Pym financed the Civil War; and it was he who moved the family seat to the new great house which he built for it, "plain, like a college," at Woburn. Unfortunately, this great capitalist, the statesman and grand patron of the Puritan Revolution, was careful to bequeath to his descendants not building plans and furnishing accounts, but only interminable, illegible manuscripts setting forth his views on predestination and election and the fate of the soul.

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER

MR. READ'S WORDSWORTH

Wordsworth. By HERBERT READ. *Faber.* 15s.

This revised edition of a book that in 1930 made history in Wordsworth criticism, contains a new introduction, and an appendix on Wordsworth's philosophy. In the introduction Mr. Read brings forward fresh textual evidence that confirms his original thesis, which, startling as it must have seemed to devout Wordsworthians of the old school, can be regarded as fully established. According to this thesis, the premature decline of Wordsworth's poetic faculty was the result of a repression of feeling brought about by the poet's acute remorse over the abandonment of his French mistress, Annette Vallon, and his illegitimate daughter, born in 1792.

Mr. Read established his case on two considerations—first, the sequence of the events of Wordsworth's life; the sudden awakening of his genius following his stay in France in 1791-2; the development of that genius during the next nine years, during which he had not given up the idea of marrying Annette Vallon as soon as the political situation made it possible for him to return to France; and its decline from the time of his marriage. The libertine became respectable—too respectable to attend de Quincey's marriage to the country girl who had borne him several children; too respectable to stand by Coleridge when his marriage broke up. In his later years he could never endure to read Goethe because of "a profligacy, an inhuman sensuality" in his works that Wordsworth found "utterly revolting." But Goethe remained a poet to the end of his long life; whereas Wordsworth, if Mr. Read is right, in attempting to disown his own sensuality, destroyed the source of his inspiration. Coleridge, in a letter written late in life, affirmed that Wordsworth was not capable of love. Coleridge was seldom wrong about his friend; and incapacity for love is a terrible indictment of a poet whose genius lay precisely in the "culture of feeling":

> . . . all grandeur comes,
> All truth and beauty from pervading love.
> That gone, we are as dust.

Mr. Read well describes the *Prelude* as the epic of the man of feeling.

Wordsworth's habit of revising his poems, often for the worse, provides Mr. Read with further confirmation of his theory. The early play, *The Borderers; Julia and Vaudracourt*, a poem autobiographical in its record, if not of incident, at least of feeling; his indecision about the verdict to be passed on Laodamia's sensual love for her husband, as revealed in a series of alterations, tell plainly the story of the sensualist turned moralist by the agency of remorse. Mr. Read brings further confirmation from modern psychological theory of the fatal working of such a repression of a sense of guilt. Thus, the transformation of the extreme revolutionary fervour of Wordsworth's youth, into an almost pathological conservatism (politics could not be mentioned in his presence, because it made him ill to discuss them) would be a screen for his revulsion against a repressed passion. The rejection of the woman whom he had loved was concealed and rationalised as a violent turning against the politics of her country.

Mr. Read is not concerned with whether Wordsworth should or should not have married his mistress. It is the concern of Hollywood to reduce the lives of great souls to domestic episodes. Mr. Read is much too fine a critic for that. It is the poet who concerns him. Sensuality made Wordsworth; repression unmade him. So much Mr. Read establishes beyond question. What one may reasonably ask is whether ten years of incandescence is not as much as any passion can give. Whether by repression or fulfilment, passion must become extinct, and its illumination exists, like that of flame, only during a process of transmutation. Without his remorse, would Wordsworth's particular gift—which we must grant was the subtle one of feeling—have yielded more? Not that the question affects Mr. Read's thesis; but it is inevitable that we should be left wondering what other course Wordsworth's genius might have run. A good case might be made for the theory that only some frustration in the natural mode ever urges man to spiritual fulfilment. Medieval ascetism deliberately frustrated the natural man in order to produce, by a kind of alchemy, the spiritual. We rely upon accident to supply us with poets, and the accident, we might discover, is always some kind of natural frustration. Transmutation is not the same thing as repression, to be sure, but could any other course have kept those fires alive?

Mr. Read's deep understanding of Wordsworth's genius is implicit in every page; it is explicit in the appendix on Wordsworth's philosophy. In this short but profound analysis Mr. Read is concerned with the poetry, not with the man. Coleridge believed Wordsworth to be capable of writing the greatest philosophical poem of all time. But Wordsworth neither knew nor cared for the rational mode of thought that is generally called philosophy. The highest mode of reason was, so he believed, intuitive. He was not a great reader, and preferred romances to abstract works. There is no evidence that he had even read Rousseau, and Mr. Read believes that his debt to Godwin has been much exaggerated. All that he took from Godwin is what Mr. Read calls his *personalism*.

Much has been said of Wordsworth's pantheism, a creed that accorded well with the intellectual configuration of the years that followed him. In the century of Darwin, science went hand in hand with "natural history," and the expansion of scientific thought had not yet carried it beyond the dimensions of nature as perceived by the senses. No poet to-day can possibly equate the experience of the human senses with the reality of science. Some kind of subjective idealism seems best suited to our present state of knowledge. Wordsworth's "nature," as known through sensation, did not seem to differ from the scientific world as known to the generation that followed him, and his pantheism became the unofficial religion of the irreligious whose faith in Christian dogma had fallen before the advance of scientific knowledge. Only Blake, a hundred years in advance of his time, put his finger on the weakness of Wordsworth's natural religion, and already perceived what we must now perforce accept, that "nature has no outline, but imagination has." Wordsworth's particular mode of pantheism is not, therefore, as satisfying to our generation as it was to his own. But Mr. Read brings forward another aspect of his philosophy, and presents Wordsworth as a humanist. He sets out a series of admirably selected passages that express "the creed of humanism, that belief in the natural dignity of man, of which Wordsworth is perhaps the supreme exponent among the world's great poets." It is in the mind of man that the power that "rolls through all things" is most plainly manifested; the human imagination that must bear "the burthen of the mystery":

> Here must thou be, O Man
> Strength to thyself; no helper hast thou here:
> Here keepest thou thy individual state
> . . . 'tis thine,
> The prime and vital principle is thine.

Mr. Read presents us with a new picture of Wordsworth, but one that can only increase our sense of his unassailable greatness.

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MR. JUSTICE AND MRS. HOLMES

Yankee from Olympus. By CATHERINE CRINKER BOWEN. *Ernest Benn.* 25*s.*

Mrs. Bowen has written a frankly romantic biography; but the two main figures in her story were both of them people about whom it was difficult not to be romantic. Mrs. Holmes, who combined so magically the plainest of features with the distinction of a queen in a fairy tale: who combined with a tongue which had wit and acid in equal proportions, a kindness and generosity as profound as it was usually anonymous: who, also, especially in her Boston days, often suffered pain and despondency with infinite courage, was one of the most remarkable women of her time. Her husband, Mr. Justice Holmes, now known to that special schoolboy whom Macaulay reserved for great occasions, was one of the three or four great judges since the time of Mansfield and Marshall; and he did as much honour to the Supreme Court by accepting Theodore Roosevelt's invitation to join it from the Massachusetts bench as did Louis D. Brandeis by accepting that nomination from Woodrow Wilson in 1916. Yet in that gift called character, with its accompanying genius of individuality, I doubt whether Justice Holmes was greater than his wife. She liberated him from domestic bondage and endured long years of uncomplaining servitude until he found himself; while she was content to be seen faintly in the sunshine of his fame.

Mrs. Bowen has brought her alive; and that, on any showing, is a feat since Mrs. Holmes took such elaborate care to conceal herself. With the great Justice, I am not quite sure she is so successful. His courage, his deep ambition, his pride, his scorn for the kind of values which the first Senator Lodge stooped to achieve, all this she brings out with great understanding. But the qualities which made Justice Holmes at once a great judge and a great man—a rarer combination than we like to admit—I think elude her vision. He was a great scholar; but he was a great scholar in the sense of Erasmus the humanist. He was a great aristocrat; but that gave him not aloofness, nor superiority, but the power to search for the best in everyone and everything. He had deep pride but he had also deep humility. He did not think the Supreme Court a method of defending property against the decisions of the legislature—like his intimate friend, William James, he never had the illusion that bigness is grandeur; and, with a passionate devotion to the United States that he had proved on the battlefields of the Civil War, he was yet able to speak to foreigners without condescension. He talked with brilliance; and he wrote his learned treatise and essays on the Common Law. Maitland, so long ago as the eighties, stated that here was the quality of work that defies the corroding touch of time. His decisions never concealed personal views in economics and politics—his views were anyhow not very different from the orthodoxies of his time; yet they never drove him from that detachment which permitted him, almost always, to see that he was no more intended to make his prejudices into principles than were other judges of his Court. I suspect that sometimes he was deluded by a formula, as in his celebrated test of when freedom of speech ceases to be tenable. Sometimes, I think, he was carried away by the lawyer's attachment to his trade union, as when he denied to Sacco and Vanzetti the right to appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States. But it is impossible to read many of his great decisions without the eager wish that they could bite some of our judges. And he could write a dissent to protect the opinions he loathed of an unimportant Russian Jew in New York, with a sweep and a passion that make the opinion great literature as well as good law. Have we a judge on our bench who could do that?

He was always generous with his time. He gave of his best to everybody who asked for it—unimportant as well as important, young as well as old; he turned aside only from the arrogant and the pompous, and those who felt that great wealth or great birth entitled them to the genuflexion of their contemporaries. He liked Seneca and Montaigne, but he liked, also, O. Henry and Dumas. He hated coteries, and snobbism, and the men and women who felt that they had a special title to privilege from society. He disliked churches, but he could enjoy their clergy when these had humour and a sense of history. He loved tradition, but never thought it a legitimate barrier against reform. The experimental mind, the audacious mind, the man of courage, always won from him a special meed of honour. He never believed in the glamour of that social hierarchy by which both Boston and Washington have sought to imitate the habits of pre-revolutionary Paris by making the expensiveness of entertainment equal the civilisation of excited converse. He knew well enough that not even the purple grandeur of the six self-created duchesses on the Potomac made one enter anew the salon of Mme Geoffrin or of Mme due Deffand, much less of the still enchanting Julie de Lespinasse. He did his duty by the official protocol, but he was never deceived by the humbug this entailed.

Mrs. Bowen draws an amusing and brilliant picture of Holmes's father, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, the famous "Autocrat." The debt that the world owes to him in the fight against puerperal fever is immense; and the very greatness of his reputation is the clue to a good deal of Mr. Justice and Mrs. Holmes's life. When his death liberated them from his self-centred vivacity, they must have felt that, at long last, they were to write their own play, instead of being marionettes in his puppet-show who had to work overtime to conceal their resentment. It must be a grim thing to be the son of a great man; and it takes a very great woman to be, to the end, a daughter-in-law, who is always understanding and kind.

HAROLD J. LASKI

AN AESTHETIC CRITIC

Poets and Story-Tellers. By DAVID CECIL. *Constable.* 10*s.*

Poets and Story-Tellers consists of nine lectures and essays, on *Antony and Cleopatra* and John Webster, the poetry of Gray, the novels of Fanny Burney and Jane Austen, Turgenev, Constant's *Adolphe*, Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster. As in *Hardy the Novelist*, Lord David Cecil is at some pains to dissociate himself from the general run of professional literary critics. This is not perversity. He is, in fact, a critic of a very special kind, one that to-day is old-fashioned and out of favour in some austere circles. He conceives it his function, in the words of Pater which he has chosen as the epigraph to his volume,

> to distinguish, to analyse, and separate from its adjuncts, the virtue by which a picture, a landscape, a fair personality in life or in a book, produces this impression of beauty or pleasure, to indicate what the source of that impression is, and under what conditions it is experienced.

His approach to art and to life is basically aesthetic. Changes in critical practise have made the word suspect, yet the aesthetic approach, so far from being narrow or precious, can be quite the opposite. It demands catholicity of taste, sound scholarship and wide sympathies, and art is only part of its range of subject-matter: human beings come as much within its province as books. Of this kind of criticism, which submits itself always to the individual work, the individual man, which is chary of large generalisations from individual cases and eschews any attempt to deduce from them general laws, Lord David Cecil is one of the most distinguished living practitioners.

And he applies the method not only to books but to men. His first reputation is as a biographer, as the author of *The Stricken Deer*, *The Young Melbourne* and *Two Quiet Lives*: and what immediately strikes one in reading *Poets and Story-Tellers*, as in reading *Early Victorian Novelists* and *Hardy the Novelist*, is how much of a piece his literary criticism is with his biographical writings. He is essentially the expository critic

of a personality or a work which has seized his enthusiasm; he is, in the primary sense of the word, an amateur; and his enthusiasm, that zestful and apparently spontaneous relationship between critic and subject, he communicates in a prose delightful, easy, intimate and conversational, at once capable of subtle analysis and of carrying a weight of learning, though, in one or two of the essays in the present collection, marred by some trifling grammatical errors which seem to have escaped the proof-reader's attention.

Compared with his other work, *Poets and Story-Tellers* is, of course, a light-weight book, as any collection of miscellaneous essays which lacks a common theme must be. Yet the peculiarly Cecilian virtues inform nearly all the essays. Pre-eminent among these is a feeling for history at once intuitive and informed. In the past this has been seen at its richest in *The Young Melbourne* and the early chapters of *Hardy the Novelist*, works, one feels, which only a critic of Lord David's particular heritage could have written. But it is manifest in the present volume in the study of *Antony and Cleopatra* as "a play about the great world of affairs"; it illuminates the essential nature of Webster as a tragic poet by setting the man in the religious and intellectual climate of his time; and it firmly establishes Gray as a typical eighteenth century man.

Perhaps the title of his most recent work of biography, *Two Quiet Lives*, has a relevance to Lord David Cecil's art as a whole, beyond its obvious applicability to Dorothy Osborne and Gray. He has been especially drawn to the quiet, the low-toned, the workers in well-defined limits, rather than to the florid, the exuberant sprawlers, the giants who do not know their own strength. This is his particular range, to use the word he applies to novelists. In *Poets and Story-Tellers* it makes him, as one would expect, most rewarding on *Adolphe* and Turgenev. The latter essay is a most perceptive study, which disengages beautifully, in a suggestive parallel with that other "reluctant agnostic," Hardy, the almost elegaic quality of sadness which is Turgenev's alone among the great Russian novelists. Somewhat surprisingly, however, he is much less good on Jane Austen than one might have expected. Little new, perhaps, remains to be said about her; but Lord David's essay strikes one as being altogether too conventional in its approach. He has been betrayed by excess of enthusiasm, and the result is hagiography rather than criticism, an exercise in what can only be called Janeolatory which ends in some curious and dubious conclusions.

As far as the author's development as a critic is concerned, the most interesting essays in this book are those on Virginia Woolf, whose method he most suggestively relates to Pater, and on E. M. Forster. For there is one objection to Lord David's theory of the range which is proper to a writer: we cannot be sure what it is until the writer has gone well outside it. In the past, Lord David has stayed well within his, with exquisite results. Yet I have sometimes caught myself wishing, in his criticism particularly, that occasionally he would, as they say, "chance his arm," go beyond what we have come to take for granted are his limits. The essays on Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster are important because they are the first, I believe, that he has written on contemporary writers; and in his study of Mr. Forster's novels he really does chance his arm. For the first time, he is not in full sympathy with his subject. The outcome is stimulating and provocative. Mr. Forster's great gifts have seldom been more judiciously praised. And yet, says Lord David, "in spite of all their brilliance and all their charm his books leave an oddly ambiguous impression on the mind. Our pleasure in them is flawed: shot through by moments of disbelief, even of discomfort." His analysis of the causes of this feeling of discomfort is masterly. He finds Mr. Forster's knowledge of human nature patchy; above all:

> His professed moral beliefs do not correspond to his instinctive moral feelings. Intellectually he is convinced that the divisions between human beings can be broken down by allowing the natural love of man for man to have free play, the elemental qualities common to humanity to express themselves; but in fact he himself cannot convey the presence of these qualities . . . This inability to achieve a consistent moral relation to his subject-matter means that the world of his creation is fundamentally unstable.

Lord David argues his case brilliantly, with wit and with some malice. He is not, I think, wholly fair to Mr. Forster, but never, it seems to me, has the basic flaw, which makes that most subtle, fascinating and tantalising novelist in the last analysis unsatisfying, been so completely exposed. And the essay whets the appetite for more studies of our contemporaries.

WALTER ALLEN

FIVE POETS

The Imprisoned Sea. By JAMES REEVES. *Poetry London.* 5s.

The Day's Alarm. By PAUL DEHN. *Hamish Hamilton.* 6s.

Beyond the Terminus of Stars. By HUGO MANNING. *Phoenix Press.* 5s.

The Slow Night. By CHRISTOPHER HASSALL. *Arthur Barker.* 7s. 6d.

Selected Poems. By DOROTHY WELLESLEY, DUCHESS OF WELLINGTON. *Williams & Norgate.* 10s. 6d.

As a batch, these five books have little in common. They illustrate mainly the obstinate tendency of English poets to go their own way. The most finished poet here is Mr. Reeves, the most flawed and powerful Dorothy Wellesley. Mr. Dehn writes pleasant and shapely poems that risk, and on the whole get away with, a direct appeal to rather easy emotions. Mr. Manning is direct and emotional, too, but shapeless; his sequence is an attempt, not quite a successful one, to bring over to English something of the peculiar sonorous despair, and the rhetorical expansiveness, of contemporary South American verse. Mr. Hassall is taking it easy; his night is not merely slow, but leisurely, and even ponderous. Calmly loquacious on a variety of topics, he writes in a strange diction, at once slack and stilted, that recalls the more jogtrot passages of Wordsworth.

Mr. Reeves's diction is contemporary, but not garishly so. He has developed under the influence of Mr. Robert Graves and his poetry has something of that mixture of tough common-sense and whimsical sensitivity that gives Mr. Graves's work its dry, cautious charm. Like Mr. Graves, he works out a poetic clue (often an obscure and teasing one) with slow, persistent care, so that the finished poem has no loose ends flapping and makes no illegitimate appeal to stock responses. These lines,

> And though the awe is left behind
> That such things caused in childish days,
> An indefinable malaise
> Remains to vex the adult mind,

suggest the double mood of much of his poetry, innocence and experience exchanging a suspicious scrutiny. For him, no simple standpoint is safe in itself. To all young poets I would recommend his uncomfortable little allegory, "Greenhallows," which illustrates this double attitude. A young man sets out on a fine day, in high spirits, to visit a beautiful country house. Once inside, he recognises it, with horror, as a mad and unconvincing figment of his own imagination. Yet he determines to go back again some day, this time prepared for the worst. The ambiguous moral is that if we approach poetry in too rash and self-confident a frame of mind it may prove to be illusion; but that if we approach illusion with proper diffidence it may prove to be poetry.

There are none of these uncomfortably double layers of meaning in Mr. Dehn or Mr. Manning. One rather wishes there were, though Mr. Dehn is a crisp and often touching poet. His subject is our ordinary uneasiness, the state of the world, the threat of war, the deaths of our friends. Though both his elegies,

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Their stricken bones lie all about the world,
Who were my friends in England ; and the law
Permits me to have loved them who lack flesh,

and his meditations,

Set down, set down that this was a spring day
To be remembered with tears,
If any are left to remember,

make a direct appeal to sentiment, they avoid sentimentality: an outer check of manners and technique takes the place of Mr. Reeves's inner check of a diffident probing irony. Mr. Manning, on the other hand, seems to have no checks, inner or outer. Unpacking his heart with words, he slams all his trumps on the table at once,

What applause and crucifixion shakes the unkempt city,
When the wild drum calls the hunter from his sleep,
What anguish of hands and whisper of knives,
Woo news of murder, fire, and decay?

with the result that towards the end of a poem he has nothing left to take his tricks with. This sort of rhetoric needs a language harsher, more metallic, more monotonous, less dependent on fine shades of feeling than our own; again and again, with Mr. Manning, I had the feeling that I was reading a translation from the Spanish.

Mr. Hassall, on the other hand, is as English as could be, and how stuffily so! I cannot understand how a poet with a high reputation for his mastery of traditional techniques can permit himself this mild Wordsworthian facetiousness, about a Demob Centre,

Arriving at a counter heaped with hats,
"Here comes another head," thought I. "So shrinks
Their number as our heads approach, and we
Don our old differences, hat by hat,"

or this weak portentousness,

On tough tires, steadily creeping,
The blue light swinging, the driver's face beside me,
O my companion, we are both in trance,
We are not here. We are possessed. History . . .

He is not in a trance. He is wide awake, and thinking, "What a good poem this will make!" And how wrong he is, at that! I have rarely read poems on the theme of war, even bad ones, that conveyed less of a feeling of tension. And the poems on other themes are just as flat.

Dorothy Wellesley's selected poems are the ruins, or the sketches, of a very considerable opus. There are massively splendid passages,

. . . desert mounds, where like white window slats
Dead camels let light through; rockier flats
Where wasted saints, with lions, possessed the caves,

and there is everywhere a wonderful grasp of scene and object and a wonderful, if bewildering, vocabulary to convey these: flacking water, scuted snakes, rudding snails, in a landscape of swales and cledges. There are the moments, that Yeats noted, of obscurely piercing intuition. Yet the poet of

There the granite blocks
Are dovetailed, joggled into knots and locks,

is also, alas, the poet of

The Cockney in his bombed-out room,
Some Earl in battle slain;
They are the saints who walk the shore,
They walk without a stain.

And it is not a matter just of occasional striking badness. Even the best poems seem often not to have reached their final drafts, and there is everywhere the strangest slaphappiness about technique: rhymes, good, bad, and indifferent, peppered in as they come: music-hall rhymes—now that we talk of Cockneys—like "mortar" and "water," "forty" and "naughty": a rich rhyme like "soul" and "console"—and rich rhyme is always awkward in English—in a fine passage where no rhyme is needed at all. Only in England could a poet of such great natural gifts have remained so much, in the worst sense, an amateur. Where Mr. Reeves is a model, for the young poet, of scrupulous economy, Miss Wellesley is an example (dangerous, because attractive in spite of everything) of splendid waste. That has not prevented her from producing noble, imperfect poems.

G. S. FRASER

NEW NOVELS

The Sacred Afternoon. By HUBERT NICHOLSON. *Heinemann.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

Rumming Park. By JOHN MORTIMER. *The Bodley Head.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

A Wreath of Roses. By ELIZABETH TAYLOR. *Peter Davies.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The Diary of Antoine Roquentin. By JEAN-PAUL SARTRE. *John Lehmann.* 9*s.* 6*d.*

There is no dearth at all of writers who can write very cleverly—in patches. So often a book begins well. But somehow, however original and striking the scene when you start you are apt to find, before very long, that something all too familiar is happening on the page; someone is saying, "Darling, I just couldn't care less." Someone answers, "The same again please 'Bert." A smartly dressed girl is thinking, ". . . Yes . . . he *is* rather sweet, isn't he" . . . The particular atmosphere that gave it character has evaporated and we're back on the old colloquial conveyer belt in the pub with Mr. and Miss 1949, and it is hard to say exactly which book you *are* in.

The Sacred Afternoon starts brilliantly. A little boy, visiting a strange house, is playing some game he doesn't understand—some kind of elaborate treasure hunt—and, losing interest, he wanders off through the Turgenev-like afternoon garden, amongst thistles and poppy heads, to encounter the head gardener's little girl and to fall in love with her. Hubert Nicholson can do it. But he can't keep the quality up. Abruptly the whole story shifts, changes calibre, and we are suddenly back with Bloomsbury and Charlotte Street toughs, sleeping out all night in the parks with lovers who only picked each other up that afternoon, confiding ideals and life histories, and then Boo! off and away—part company, lost in the crowd, back into the pubs again, and no explanations of anything given. It's not strictly fair to say there *is* no explanation. But the fact is that the book gets so cursory that it is wellnigh unintelligible.

What a treat, however, when a writer whose first chapter is amusing and sophisticated stays the course, and delivers the goods chapter after chapter. Mr. John Mortimer is consistent, and takes trouble to get his points across. He has written a very charming, light, satirical novel. Yet he can be sensibly serious too. Charles, candidate for the "Progressive Party," goes to nurse his country constituency from Rumming Park, the old family house—now shut up and unlived in—of his pretty wife, Catherine. Catherine is cold, and treats him abominably; our heart goes out to the *sympathique* Charles. Catherine's father, however, is the *pièce de résistance.* A man of the "old school," he has the charm of Colonel Chinstrap rather—vague, friendly and gentlemanly, although not like Chinstrap an old soak. This good natured gentleman's gentlemanly misunderstandings of everything and everybody are the chief joy of the book. There are, however, many other entertaining country characters as well; and altogether many a queer *contretemps* occurs at Rumming Park.

The last two books on this list we noticed reviewed in the Sunday papers: *The Wreath of Roses,* and the *Diary of Antoine Roquentin.* Of the *Wreath of Roses,* it was said: "That so exquisite a writer as Elizabeth Taylor is also 'ordinary' is something to be thankful for." Sartre's book was mentioned only at the end of another fiction article: "I have space only to mention 'The Diary,'" etc. And it was described thus: "the self portrait of a thwarted man of letters seeking . . . for some fitting expression of himself."

These two opinions are representative doubtless of a large public, and are interesting on that account. It boils down to this: Elizabeth Taylor finds popularity for being "ordinary" in an "exquisite" way, Jean-Paul Sartre makes himself unpopular by his bitterness ("thwarted"), and by the impression of relentless egotism that is produced by Monsieur Roquentin. Undoubtedly the critics have picked out very real facets of the two books in question. There are, also, other facets. In the case of Sartre, there is, of course, the fact that this is the book of a philosopher of European renown into which has been put, surely, a good deal of his finest thought. In the case of Miss Taylor, there is the fact that there has been put virtually no "thinking" in the intellectual sense at all—spiritually her book is a "pre-fab."

Much is left unexplained by Sartre in this "diary." How much for instance is M. Roquentin Sartre himself? What is Sartre's own attitude to the man? There is no indication on this point. Above all, how does M. Roquentin come to be so very emotionally ill? M. Sartre's own attitude to the fact that M. Roquentin is a man without a heart is obscure. The man is an oyster—producing the impression of a cold, clammy, blind, scaly, shut shell. But, oyster-like, he produces pearls, of great spiritual and intellectual price.

M. Sartre certainly makes his book as hard to read as possible. One wonders why? Roquentin not only closes a sharp, razor-edged shell in the reader's face, but spouts torrents of fishy poison all over him as well. Ugh! Nausea is right. (The book was called of course *La Nausée* in the original French.) Only a strong man will read on and win through.

Personally we were, in all literalness, sick into a basin three times, and experienced a long day of physical *migraine* and vertigo during the reading of the *Diary of M. Roquentin.* Friends said that this was an attack of the "'flu." But then they hadn't read *La Nausée.*

It is completely unjust to write off M. Roquentin as someone who is merely "seeking some fitting expression of himself." M. Roquentin is sojourning at the seaside town of Bouville, officially in order to write a biography,

PHILOSOPHY

The Journal of the Royal Institute of Philosophy

Edited by Sidney E. Hooper

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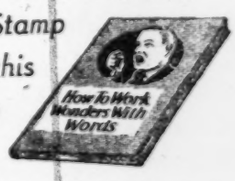

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but in actual fact he is making a study—in the public library—in the *cafés*, in the streets, beside the sea, of the very fabric of life itself.

He inquires into the "significance" of life. He searches ardently and with a panic desperation for a justification. He attempts many things! For instance to understand the essential difference between the past and the present moment. Then he gets busy sorting out different categories of "realities." I would say that Sartre's great feat in this book is that he gives the average reader a real glimpse of the white-hot passion of the philosopher for his philosophy. He shows us that a man may be desperately ill spiritually, as Roquentin is, that his mainspring may have been broken (or call it a broken heart), yet he may retain the most valorous patience in questing after truth, and the most vital and glorious energy and skill in riding the wriggling, evanescent, treacherous sea-horses of "appearance" safely to dry land.

Beside the rays of this powerful and adventurous mind, so desperately sick and unhappy, and yet amazingly so full of fire and stamina, Miss Elizabeth Taylor's country cottages and pubs, her artists, discontented wives, and mysterious strangers, seem to dissolve and melt into transparency. We are reminded of how once, as a child, we saw a huge, deep-sea jelly fish, the size of an open umbrella, dissolve on the baking promenade in the midday sun in a few hours, until nothing was left but two eyes and two claws!

This, then, is the virtue of the *Diary of M. Roquentin;* it builds up an inner structure of freshly conceived, fundamental realities, of significant values, from the chaotic wastes of a man's casual perceptions of life. And, incidentally, Sartre can be "ordinary" in an "exquisite" way too—that is the big surprise of this novel. The delicious and lyrical picture he gives of the long bourgeois Bouville Sunday; or again of the interior of the Municipal Library, glittering in the sunlight, shows that he can in fact beat the "ordinary" descriptive writer hollow at his own game, if he wants to. But he doesn't attempt, in this work, the ordinary novel. He concentrates on what so obviously interests him most—not human beings, but philosophical and metaphysical notions. That is what makes this book so very much better than his others.

JULIA STRACHEY

WEIGHT OF PLATITUDE

Conditions of Happiness. By GORDON RATTRAY TAYLOR. *The Bodley Head.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Mr. Taylor sets out to expose the bankruptcy of our civilisation; in fact he illustrates it. We want to know how our civilisation can survive and how we can be happy in it, and it is to answer precisely these questions that Mr. Taylor has avowedly written his book. Eagerly we open it, only to be regaled with a diet of platitude dressed up in the jargon of contemporary sociology. "Only those who understand the nature of happiness," the blurb tells us quoting from the text, "are in a position to appraise the success of a society or the desirability of a régime." No doubt. What, then, of the nature of happiness? "The problem of happiness," the blurb continues, "is inseparable from the problem of behaviour." Nobody, I think, could withhold their agreement. But what then? Presumably, we must change our behaviour. Two questions arise. First, what kind of change and, secondly, how is it to be effected? I will briefly summarise Mr. Taylor's answer.

Most of us, it appears, are suffering from frustrated needs. We live in large, impersonal cities where our neighbours are unknown to us, when we ought to live in small, well-defined social groups. Mr. Taylor quotes with approval Aldous Huxley's description of man's political needs as "personal independence and responsibility towards and within a self-governing group." Again, we live in a whirl of noise and bustle. We are forever striving to save time, yet no generation has so little time to spare; we require, then, more space and quiet. It follows that we need a smaller population living for the most part in villages, diversified, in order to meet the needs of cultural and economic life, by an occasional small town. (Has not Clough Williams-Ellis specified 50,000 persons as the correct population for a town?) We are warned, however, against supposing that Mr. Silkin's new satellite towns will fill the bill. Too large to achieve a community life of their own, they will undermine the rural life of their neighbourhoods.

A smaller population will operate machines but not so many and not so exclusively, for mass production technique must be superseded. It involves far too many jobs which are fragmentary, meaningless and, therefore, dull. Our work must be absorbing; also it must be carried out by members of a team which sees both the beginning and the end of the processes involved in the making of a particular article. Will this mean less leisure? Yes, it will. But what is the good of leisure spent passively at the "movies" or the "dogs"? A man does not want to work at something he despises in order to enjoy leisure afterwards; he would rather work like blazes at something which expresses him and evokes his skill and resource.

Will it involve some diminution of efficiency, reduction of output and lowering of the standard of life? Again, probably it will, but "a certain falling in the standard of living as measured in goods would be more than compensated in terms of happiness by the increased pleasure of making them."

We begin to see the direction in which these observations are tending. It is to nothing less than a change in human nature, a change which will fit us to live in a co-operative instead of a competitive society. Nor is such a change impossible. There is, after all, nothing intrinsically competitive about mankind; there are of have been many human communities of which the basis has been co-operative and in which service to the community rather than skill in money-making at its expense was held in honour. Such a change involves two things, a change in values and a change in the social pattern, and of these the change in the social pattern must come first. To bring it about "*a creative effort* [the italics are the author's] is required." We need "the imagination to visualise a different pattern of society and the courage to work for it." Presently, however, it appears that not only our values and our institutions but our personalities themselves must be reconstituted.

But how, we ask, but how? Mr. Taylor's book would, no doubt, be very cheap at the price if he could only tell us—if he could only begin to tell us. But he does not even begin. The diagnosis is accepted without a demur by at any rate one reader. I cannot cavil—indeed, how could anyone cavil?—at any of the counts in the indictment of our society. But we are sick of being told what is the matter with us; we know it all too well. Granted the vague generality of the terms in which Mr. Taylor's suggestions for improvement are couched, we can agree with most of them, even if we find the proposed abolition of lawyers, prisons and judges in a co-operative society a little hard to envisage. But when we repeat our question, "But how?" there is really no answer at all. Much, it seems, depends upon the right education of children; therefore, there must be examinations for motherhood. The dwindling family is to be replaced by the "in group" of friendly and familiar persons living in a locality. In it children must be taught to behave in ways which foster happiness and "which deter them from actions which are inimical to it."

The basic needs of the child no less than of the man "is to love and to be loved." "In this reciprocal nature of the love-function lies the promise of final harmony. It is no easy promise, we have to labour to achieve it . . ." And so on, and so on, until the reader sinks under the weight of platitude. It is exactly as if one had been overlaid by a vast feather-bed! Once and once only did Mr. Taylor make me prick up the ears of interest. Our civilisation, he says, simply can't go on like this. It is bound to break up in any

event; we must, then, replace it by another "held together by forces" of unity "of which we are consciously aware." If we fail to take this step, "we will be replaced in due course by a creature better fitted to do so." Now what, I wonder, does he mean by that? Who is to do the replacing? Nature? Evolution? God? Mr. Taylor does not tell us. C. E. M. JOAD

Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939. Edited by E. L. WOODWARD and ROHAN BUTLER. Third Series. Vol. I, 1938. *H.M. Stationery Office.*

This volume of Foreign Office documents marks a surrender to publicity: it is the first of two on the policy of "Munich" and will be followed by further volumes leading up to the outbreak of war. The present volume covers the period from Hitler's seizure of Austria until the sending of Lord Runciman to Prague at the end of July. Since the collection is strictly confined to Foreign Office papers, it does not illuminate the motives of British policy, except by reflection; and at some remote future the historian will have to explore the papers of the Prime Minister and the records of the Cabinet Office. Still, even with the evidence of this volume, there can be no doubt as to the general line of British policy. This aimed deliberately at the appeasement of Germany, by seeking to satisfy in full Germany's demands in regard to Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovkia was to be detached from her allies and, if necessary, dismembered or even placed under German hegemony. This policy was promoted allegedly on the ground that it was in the best interest of the Czechs themselves; but it is difficult to resist the feeling that the directors of British policy would have been less sympathetic to German grievances if an interest which they regarded as vital to Great Britain had been involved. The hero of the volume, inspiring British policy and dominating it, is Sir Nevile Henderson. His outlook is illustrated in a sentence in a letter to Lord Halifax: "I only see one good point about the extra sixpence on the income-tax. It may possibly induce the British public to be in favour of an agreement with Germany which is aimed at removing it again." It was later the fashion to make out that Nevile Henderson was ignorant and a blunderer; in reality he was ingenious, hard-working and resolute. His failure was to be hopelessly wrong. The same is true of British policy in this period as a whole. Far from being bewildered or lethargic, it was active, creative, subtle—and altogether disastrous.

Social Pragmatism. By LAN FREED. *Watts.* 15s.

Social Pragmatism is not, the author insists, a new theory to supersede ethics. Mrs. Freed offers an analysis of "good conduct" as "conduct which effectively promotes general happiness". She tries to avoid saying that such conduct *ought* to be pursued, because the "ought" language is the mark of the moralist. Instead she says that such conduct *must* be pursued; and speaking thus of the "must," Mrs. Freed believes that she is using the language of science. On this basis she claims that, where other moral theories have been philosophical, and therefore false, Social Pragmatism is scientific, and therefore true. The flaw in this engaging argument is the ambiguity of the word "must". Mrs. Freed says that people's conduct *must* be socially pragmatic (since it is in everyone's own interest that it should be); but the "must" in this statement is a rational "must"—a *stupid-not-to* "must". The "must" of a scientific law is an empirical "must"—a *couldn't-do-otherwise* "must". If the "must" of Social Pragmatism were the "must" of science, everything anybody ever did would be socially pragmatic. But since most crimes, etc., are not, on Mrs. Freed's own definition, socially pragmatic actions, there is clearly no necessity for all conduct to be socially pragmatic. Socially pragmatic conduct turns out, after all, to be what *should be*; and Social Pragmatism is no more a descriptive science than any other ethical theory. It is rather a pity that Mrs. Freed should claim that she is not writing ethics, because if this book is not ethics, it is not anything. But as a modern re-statement of a substantially utilitarian analysis, *Social Pragmatism* can be recommended.

The Museum, its History, and its Tasks in Education. By ALMA S. WITTLIN. *Kegan Paul.* 25s.

This is an attempt to combine a history of museums in Europe with a treatise on the part that ideal museums could play in the reform of education. The arrangement of the historical section follows the various functions that museums have exercised in society: economic hoard, social prestige and magic collection, collections as an expression of group loyalty, and so on. The Muses have been made to extend their seats from the treasures of Priam and Menelaus, public processions, holy relics and magical objects to the endless variety of private and institutional collections. With this range and system of classification, arbitrary selection and still more arbitrary division were unavoidable. Much interesting and amusing information has been brought together, but it seems that Dr. Wittlin would have served her own purposes more wisely if she had written a single historical narrative leading as directly as possible to her main subject, the public museum as it exists to-day. The book is solemn in manner and this occasionally, though not often, leads to pretentiousness: "Of the appeal of art to the emotions numerous instances are available from every community."

Many of Dr. Wittlin's proposals for reform relate to the familiar dispute as to whether a museum should present objects dumbly, on their own merits, or whether they should rather be shown as a part of a display thoroughly labelled and with an instructive aim. Although alert to the importance of undisturbed aesthetic enjoyment, she is a vehement champion of the museum as an instrument for public enlightenment and instruction. If some readers are provoked to a perverse craving for the old days of magnificent junk-palaces and self-indulgent dilettanti, they should overcome it. Dr. Wittlin's practical recommendations are in the main both sane and necessary; all of them deserve expert study.

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Set by Desmond Shawe-Taylor

Italian firemen have threatened a general strike unless a popular song which makes fun of a village fire-brigade is suppressed. The usual prizes are offered for a letter of protest from a section of the community which discovers itself to be insulted in some well-known opera. Length not exceeding 200 words.

Report by Desmond Shawe-Taylor

Complaints poured in from all sides: from Dukes about *Rigoletto*, from Doctors about *Wozzeck*, from Monumental Masons about *Don Giovanni*, from the P.R.O. of the D******m G**l Pipers about *Schwanda*, and from the President of the Association of British Goudok Players about *Prince Igor*. The Society for the Preservation of the Sabbath (R. S. Jaffray) might possibly have passed the sordid events of *Cavalleria Rusticana* but for the fact that they take place on a Sunday. Wagner came in for widespread disapproval. Fergie demanded that the entire *Ring* should be rewritten in accordance with Marxist ideology, objecting in particular to the "representation of the working class as stupid giants and dwarf blacksmiths." H. J. Ryan protested against the "dangerously distorted picture of municipal government presented in *Die Meistersinger*. . . . The townspeople are riotous: the cobblers remain open until midnight;

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